

FROM
Childhood
TO
Childhood

Children's Books and Their Creators



By J E A N K A R L

FROM Childhood TO Childhood

Children's Books and Their Creators

JEAN KARL

Here is a book about children's literature from the viewpoint of a distinguished editor known and respected for both the honors her authors have earned and for her own dedication to this exacting field of publishing. *From Childhood to Childhood* is not a book solely about how to write a children's book or how to illustrate one, nor solely a book about selecting, editing, producing, and selling one, although all of these subjects make up its content. Rather, it is a distillation of convictions acquired in twenty years spent pursuing quality in reading for children, of principles Jean Karl absorbed from the editors under whom she trained in a wide-ranging career, of wisdom gained from the librarians and teachers whose guidance she eagerly sought in repeated travels across the country.

With obvious concern and a fresh personal approach, the author delineates why children's books must exist and do, to what standards their readers are entitled, how and by whom good children's books are written, including an overview of the history of writing for children.

With modesty that equals her sincerity, Jean Karl sets down in her foreword the core of her convictions:

(Continued on back flap)

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From Childhood to Childhood

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The John Day Company : New York

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*From childhood to childhood the
Message Goodbye from the shoulders of victory
To the followers
From the sea to the nearest of kin*

W. S. MERWIN

Foreword

No one knows everything about anything. Most of us get caught up in special areas of knowing that interest us and we learn as much as time and our resources will allow. If we are lucky, we find we can devote a good deal of effort to our study, perhaps we can even work full-time at it, earn a living by it. Still, the more we know, the more we see we do not know.

For many of us, somewhere along the way there comes a time when, in order to learn more, we must solidify what we know—create a pattern or structure of it—and stand aside to get a picture of where we are. This book is for me an attempt to do just that. It is not a book about how to write a children's book. It is not a book

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about how the illustrations for a children's book should be prepared. Nor is it a book about how to edit a children's book, how to produce one, how to sell one, or even, wholly, how to judge one. It is not even a book that tells exactly which children's books are the ones a well-informed adult should have read. It is not any of these things, although all of them make up some part of it. Basically, it is a book about children's books from the viewpoint of one editor of children's books; it is an attempt to make a pattern of what I have learned and what I think about children's books now, some twenty years after I first began a serious pursuit of them. It includes many things from many sources, some of them sources I can no longer identify, for the information has become so much a part of me. It surely includes things I learned from many people at Scott, Foresman, from Zerna Sharp and from notes on prospective reader stories by May Hill Arbuthnot, as well as my own reflections on the enormous number of books and stories I read there, looking for reader material; much of it must come from study of the work and procedures of my predecessor at Abingdon Press, Edith Patterson Meyer, from authors and illustrators I knew there, from mistakes I made there and successes I enjoyed; and certainly a great deal must come from Atheneum and the people and the books that have made my years there so rich.

This book then is an attempt to express in broad terms some portion, how much I cannot be wholly sure, of what I have absorbed about good children's books from many people—editors, librarians, teachers, authors, illustrators, and other people in the publishing world. How much the book represents of what I will think ten, or even five, years from now, I cannot say at all. The only thing I know for sure is that thoughts and ideas must change to stay alive. Yet I do believe that, however my thinking proceeds, much of what is here will remain as a basis for all the new things I hope to learn. And though what is here is of necessity imperfect, I can hope that it may be of some use to others. For this is how learning proceeds, for

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adults and for children. Imperfect learnings move from one to another, for polishing and perfecting, and eventually from one generation to the next: from childhood to childhood.

New York, February 1970

From Childhood to Childhood

Why a Children's Book?

"Why," says the heretic, "why should there be children's books? What's the matter with these kids? In my day we read the Bible, Tennyson, Dickens, Scott, and Cooper. No watered-down milk-toast kind of stuff for us. That's what's wrong with these crazy kids! No guts, no willpower. Everything's too easy. Children's books! Such nonsense!"

"What about *Little Women*, *Hans Brinker*, *Robin Hood*, *Treasure Island*," says the true believer. "Surely they were available even in your day. Not to mention *Sarah Crewe*, *Jackanapes*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Elsie Dinsmore*, and all those dime novels about Frank Merriwell. What about them?"

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"Sissy stuff, mostly. Oh, *Treasure Island*, *Robin Hood*, *King Arthur*, and the dime novels. But they were different. Not the namby-pamby stuff we see today. Tripe. Not worth the paper it's printed on. Why does anyone bother?"

The heretic has spoken and, as many experts would agree, what is not utter ignorance has had its say. Some children should be challenged by the Bible, Tennyson, Dickens, Scott, and even Hemingway, Steinbeck, Salinger, and Golding—and others of whom the heretic might approve less. But most people recognize that today is not the day of the heretic's youth. The world has changed since Cooper and Scott, even since Tennyson and Willa Cather. The children who are reading now are a far more diverse group than those who were reading then. Their reading interests are more varied, their reading abilities span a wider range. Their needs are more complex. Where among the old books are books that speak of rockets and quasars, of television and radar, of Africa as a near neighbor, and the stars as goals for fully possible future journeys?

And so to meet these needs and others, there are children's books in endless varieties. Actually there have been children's books for a long time. It is just that there are more of them today, more for the heretics to know about and to challenge. Yet often these critics are not aware of the best in children's books. Good children's books are not sentimental pap, not sissy stuff, not spineless nothings. Instead they are books geared to today, geared to children's tastes: books that talk about the world as it is without euphemism; books that understand children and cater to their many interests and their varied reading abilities. They are books in which children feel at home. And they are books for all children, not just for the privileged group who had the time and encouragement to read when the heretic was a child.

Such books are not lightly done; they are not casually written. They are meant for children of this generation, and they show it in their knowledge of what these children are. Today's children are

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very wise about many things. They are not easily fooled. They are not easily led. And yet they are ignorant of many things that children of an earlier generation knew well. Today's children do not have leisure, or at least an unhurried pace, as some earlier generations knew it. Many today do not know the joys of creative play. Too many do not know the comfort of a contained and tender family group. Few know society without war, bloodshed, and tension. And few really know the joy of work. These ignorances are not their fault. They are a product of their times. The books they read must cater both to what they know and are and what they do not know. What good children's books are today is a result of what our children are. An examination of why children's books exist and what they should be can begin therefore only with children themselves.

Society has always had divided opinions about children. Some peoples have thought of them simply as playthings. Some cultures have considered them to be small versions of men and women; with wayward extrusions, perhaps, that needed to be cut off or hammered in to achieve the adult mold; unfinished, perhaps, and in need of rich lessons on adult understanding and decorum; always needing a certain amount of growth; but small adults nevertheless. Other cultures and individuals have and do look upon children as a race apart, as a group that exists as an independent unit, one that may sometimes be regarded with envy and sometimes with amused indifference, a group to be controlled, to be cared for as needed, and to be kept as much apart from the world of adults as possible. These are the extremes of social attitudes, and there are many gradations in between. Both the extremes and many of the gradations are still active.

But the truth lies at neither of the extremes nor in the middle. The truth is that children are people. They are people just as adults are people. They are not small adults because they have not had as much experience with living and with people as adults and because

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many of their needs—physical, mental, and emotional—are different. Yet they are not a race apart. They may have their own special dreams, their own visions, their own fears, their own triumphs, and some special knowledges all their own. But these are related to the world in which they find themselves, the same world the adult knows, and are based on observations of that world and on things that have been learned from adults. Eventually, of course, the children will themselves be adults.

If children sometimes seem strange and remote, if their ideas seem odd and revolutionary, the reason is not that they are not seeing the same world an adult sees, but that they do not see it through the same lens of experience as an adult; the experiences of the child create for him a lens with a different focal length. The thoughts of the child are patterned by events he is seeing unencumbered by the past. Children accept and take for granted material things, ideas, and problems that did not exist when adults were in their own formative period. Naturally the world looks different; it is different. Yet this does not make today's children a race apart, but simply a growth toward the future. They are the human projection into the days to come, the nearest bit of tomorrow we can touch.

It is a mistake to think that a child knows more than an intelligent adult about life and the world. He doesn't. He may have great surface knowledge, but his knowledge has not yet filtered down into wisdom and common sense. And without these, knowledge cannot be exercised to its best advantage. At the same time it is a mistake to think that lack of wisdom is lack of intelligence and to try to keep a child from knowing what he wants to know, to keep him away from any knowledge that belongs to the adult world, if he really wants that knowledge. The curious child will discover what he wants to know, either from wise adults who can help him achieve some perspective on what he learns or from less reliable sources. He cannot be kept from learning if he wants to learn, but he can be kept from a sensible maturity and a worthwhile frame-

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work for his knowledge if he does not receive his information and the help he needs, as he struggles to grow, from sources that are sensible and that make sense to him.

The child at his best is a person reaching out, grasping for life, seeking the things that will satisfy his curiosity, yearning for the things that are just beyond him. And what he becomes as an adult person is very much determined by what happens to him as a child person.

Childhood is not a time of innocence, it is not a time of unmitigated pleasure, it is not a time of easy joys and carefree days. It is so only in the nostalgia of adults. Childhood is a time of difficult inquiry, of trying discovery, of hard quests and unfulfilled desires. It is a time of bumping into limits that seem to have no reason, of enduring meaningless ceremonies, and also of striking out into exciting visions. It is a time of pain and yet a time of ecstasy, because so much is new and discovery of the new is always filled with both a wonder and a hurt.

Children are all this and more. Not a myth, not a theory, not a social attitude, but an actuality, real and always present. And it is because of what children are, not what adults think they are or wish they were, that real children's books exist. Good children's books are those books that appeal to children as they are, not as adults sometimes project them to be. Good children's books are written for an intelligent, thoughtful group of people who are searching for ideas, for truth, for unfolding patterns of experience, and for emotional satisfactions that will help them develop into richer, more complete people. Yet good books remember also that children have limited knowledge, that they can be cruel, thoughtless and stubborn, and that they do not often have the self-discipline of adults.

What kinds of books, then, shall they have? What makes a children's book a children's book? This is not easy to establish. It is not style or beauty of language or seriousness of intent on the part of the author that makes the difference between adult books and chil-

dren's books. The basic standards of literature do not vary for a children's book as against an adult book. It is not subject matter. Children are interested in as many subjects as adults, perhaps more. Rather, the difference lies in the author's approach to his material and in some cases in the depth and breadth of what he covers.

Children's books are generally written by adults. They proclaim adult values; they present an adult view of the world. But the adults who write them speak in terms a child can understand and appreciate, and they are people who truly know what it means to be a child. Through their books a child can explore more of the things, the ideas, the places, and the people that exist than he could on his own, and can do so much more quickly than he could in any other way. Yet the books do not exist just to give information, per se, or to impose on the reader the author's viewpoint. Rather, the author creates an experience; he shows how things are, how they come to be and feel and grow, in an atmosphere open to examination. Good books of all kinds become for their readers a dimension of life itself, a search for both inward and outward discoveries, whether it be a group interacting and searching as in *The Wheel on the School* or an individual quest as in *Harriet the Spy*.

For children whose limited experience with life is a major problem, such carefully packaged and easily digested experiences are invaluable, if the experiences themselves are probing enough and thought-provoking enough to be worthwhile. A good children's book is an experience of events and also an experience of ideas that lie deeper than events. Such a book is a means by which a sensitive adult can give a child an opportunity to deepen as well as broaden his vision of life. A children's book, then—any book for that matter—is a packaged expression of some aspect of life as it is—and something more: an idea, a viewpoint, a starting point. It is not a finished, complete, didactic expression, but a beginning to be thought about and built on. Who could read *Ellen Grae* or *Where the Wild Things Are* and not rethink them, perhaps many times,

discovering many things that are not really a part of the books at all, but a product of the authors' beginnings and the readers' thinking.

This is the beginning of what a children's book is. But there are other things that make them distinct. The first of these is outlook. A children's book looks at life with hope, even when it is painting the most disastrous of circumstances. It does not take a Pollyanna attitude; characters need not even be as hopeful as Anne of Green Gables. It does not believe that everything is always fine. But it is willing to hope that something can be done, that life can be better. Characters in children's books may be in difficulty, despairing or desperate; they may be crying for help in situations they cannot resolve; but they never give way to total hopelessness. They retain the belief in the future that is the heritage of the young. Children are not yet totally defeated. For them there is still the trust that there is a way out, whatever the situation. This is where children's books depart most radically from adult books. It is not illicit sex or narcotics addiction or any particular example of human depravity that keeps some adult books from being children's books, but the total hopelessness of their outlook. Though many children know every sordidness far too well, it is the one tiny bit of hope for something better that remains within them, even in their darkest moments, that keeps them children and that must be captured in a children's book. When hope is gone, childhood is gone.

Beyond hope, children's books have about them a sense of the wonder of the world. They have a freshness and a newness that does not allow the jadedness of the worldly wise to permeate too far and destroy too much. Children's books are not naïve. They do not reject the difficulties living presents, but they still believe that there is delight and joy and beauty, and something more—a vision of what can be. Even so bucolic a world as that of *The Wind in the Willows* has a toad in trouble. Yet it says, there is beauty in the world, destroy it as we will. And there is beauty in the human

spirit, degrade or destroy it though we may. And these beauties belong as a part of children's books. For children must believe in life if they are to live.

In good children's books there is also a sense of adventure, a feeling that the unexpected can happen. Whether it be Jim Hawkins finding a treasure map or Claudia and Jim Kincaid finding a way to run away, sometimes the thing that seems impossible does happen and believably so. Every true child hopes for this, and good books, honest books, prove that dreams can be fulfilled.

There is also in most children a feeling of affinity for the world, a sense of being a part of nature, a sympathy for animals and for all that lives. Pet stories, stories of wild animals, and books about nature reflect these feelings and deepen them. Who can deny the enriching value of stories like *A Dog So Small* or *Rascal*? But all good books for children make all life seem valuable.

It is these—hope and wonder, the sense of beauty and adventure and of the glory of life—that the young have, and good children's books have, too. It is these qualities that children's authors have retained as adults and express in their books. These things are in all the great books that have been written for children, and they are also a part of most of the adult books of the past and present that have been taken by children for their own.

Once these attitudes or outlooks are present, almost any book can become a children's book. Most likely, however, a children's book, if it is fiction, will be a book that has children in it because children are most likely to be attracted to books about people like themselves. This is true of adults as well as children, of course. Many years ago there was a mystery novel called *Dead Indeed* that took place largely in the children's book department of a large New York publisher, surprisingly like the one where the author (who wrote under a pseudonym) had once been employed. No one read that book as avidly as publishing house employees, and especially children's book department people. We all like to see what we know portrayed in books.

Why a Children's Book?

A book that has children in it will probably duplicate some experiences most children have already had, and if it is going to hold the child's interest, it will add some new ones. It is reassuring to realize that your own experiences are not entirely unique. But it is better still to have new adventures. Few adults can read a book in which everything is totally strange. Neither do adults wish to read books in which everything is something they already know. Children are the same. Good books are a blend of new and old, in different proportion in different books for different readers and different subjects.

Finally, children's books, with their wonder and beauty and hope and sense of aliveness that makes them real, make children feel that they are a part of the overall doings of man. They make a willing reader sense that he is a part of life, and an essential part of it. A good book respects a child's intelligence, his pride, his dignity, and most of all his individuality and his capacity to become. A child is a becoming person; he is not yet all that he will be. Because his growing edge is so strong, so much the most compelling part of him, a good book will have a growing edge to match his. This is where the wonder and the hope lie.

A book for a child is a serious business. It is not a place to begin writing, a practice ground. A children's book is designed for an important person. It need not be a serious book, it can certainly be a book of humor, but it must be taken seriously, written seriously, and dealt with seriously. It is more important to do a children's book well than any other kind of book simply because children are still growing. They have not had enough experience themselves, often, to judge the literary quality, the accuracy, or the truthfulness of what they read. Therefore, they deserve authors and books that they can trust. And they deserve them in every area of interest to them and at every age level.

Why children's books? Because children are children. Because their needs differ in degree, if not in kind, from those of an adult. Because theirs is a fresher world than the adult sees. Because in our

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day the challenges are so great, the learnings children must encounter so diverse and so numerous, that only many, many books will make possible the experiences each child must have. Because although sometimes pleasure can be derived from mass activities, pleasure must sometimes be individual and private; and a book can be the very best of private pleasures if it seems to say something meant especially for the reader.

What Children's Books?

Once the need for children's books is acknowledged, the next question to be answered is "What children's books?" Are there special books every child should read? Are there books to be avoided? What will children read? What do children read? What books answer their special needs?

The obvious answer is that books for children should be books of excellence. But that merely begs a further question: Are all books of excellence suitable for all children? And the answer to this must be no. Children are different and like different kinds of books. There must be many kinds of books of excellence.

An examination of what kinds of books are and should be availa-

ble for today's children could be the subject of an entire book itself. In fact, many such books have already been written. But it is also possible to take an overall look at some general kinds of books, some broad categories, and examine them to find a pattern of excellence wide enough to encompass all young readers.

At what age level do children's books begin? And how? The answer is that they begin very young. And they begin in variety. They also begin with both authors and illustrators who know what they are doing. In other words, the first big category of books a child comes to know is the category of picture books.

Excellence in children's books should begin with excellence in books for two- and three-year-olds, even younger children sometimes, and go on to excellence in books for five- and six-year-olds. Most of these are short picture-book stories, small books of poems and nursery rhymes, and simple nonfiction books that present basic and elementary concepts. Nothing to it, the novice writer says confidently, turning out a casual little work quickly, which says nothing and was meant to say nothing. The hardest thing of all, says the professional writer, who knows that in a short work one must choose every word, shape every phrase, and control every sentence because there is so little room in which to encase a significant statement or idea. These books for the very young are important because they are the books that shape a child's listening and looking in his earliest years when his ideas are just beginning to form. They will help shape his sense of language, his taste in listening and later in reading, his ideas about books and what they contain, his sense of poetry and rhythm, and his approach to learning. The books he has in these years must be well written, they must be entertaining, they must give the consumer high standards of literary taste, they must form a foundation for all the reading that the child and the adult he will become will do later. Yet they must also be books that meet the child easily on his own age and knowledge level.

Once a child has learned to read quite well, he will no longer be

looking at picture books. He will not want to be seen with anything that looks like a "baby book." So he will proceed to longer books. These may be divided by cryptic codes on the book jackets into books for children from seven to ten, eight to twelve, ten to fourteen, or some similar division. This does not mean that all children in any one of these age categories will necessarily find the book attractive. If it means anything at all, it means that some children at some point in that age range will find that book suitable. But age levels do not really mean much, and neither do reading levels, when it comes to an individual child. What matters to him is what interests him. And if he finds a book that gives him what he wants, he will read it, providing he can read it, regardless of the shape of its contents. Most of all he will want books that seem to be a sensible approach to something that is important to him. And many young readers will want books in incredible variety because many things seem important, sometimes temporarily and sometimes permanently.

Children's books for both the picture-book age and for older readers into the young teen years come in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, whatever the child desires. Almost nothing is completely unavailable. Yet more books are always being produced and more books are constantly needed because knowledge increases, the tone of society changes, the image of what the world is moves on. The good of the past continues to be good, but the past is never enough. Children are bound to today, but looking for tomorrow, and books must give back to them the spirit of what they know.

Good books of fiction come in many varieties, but almost all of those written today could be written at no other time. They could not have been written thirty years ago; it will be impossible to write them ten years from now. They are a product of an author living in this day and sensitive to all its overtones.

This is most directly seen in modern-day fiction that discusses everyday life and everyday problems. A generation ago children read *Swallows and Amazons*. Although it was not new even then, it still

belonged to life as it was lived. Not that many readers had a father off in the British navy or had ever sailed a boat or camped on an island. Yet the ideas it presented and the warm, secure, comfortable, relatively untroubled life those children led were part of the life most children who read the book knew, too. The outside world did not cast its shadows on their lives or the lives of the Amazons or the Swallows, except casually. Rereading *Swallows and Amazons* now, one finds oneself wondering if it was really safe for those children to be camping alone on that island and batting around that lake at night. And it is not the danger of fire or the danger of boats that one worries about. Rather it is danger from people. Living is more dangerous in these troubled and overpopulated times. We no longer assume that children, or adults, can go about with absolute disregard of who or what may menace them. Claudia and Jamie of *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* are more normal for today's world. They trust people—but only so far. They take nothing for granted. They live on an edge of tension that the Swallows and the Amazons never knew. We cannot expect another *Swallows and Amazons* today. Nor in ten years will we expect another *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Yet *Swallows and Amazons* can still be read with pleasure by children today, and Claudia and Jamie will probably be delighting other children in ten, fifteen, and twenty years. These books have other values that lie beyond a simple feel for the times. A good book of fiction about everyday life is this way. It belongs to its day, but it also has deep underlying values that belong to all days. Most fiction for children is everyday fiction: school stories, pet stories, everyday adventure stories. And it is these books that most children love best, possibly because they find it easier to put themselves into such stories.

But other books for children also present our time, although they may not speak directly of our time or place. These are books about other people, other lands, and other days. Each decade, each social

era, tends to view such things with different eyes. When James Fenimore Cooper was romanticizing the noble savage, he was less accurate in his presentation, though much closer to the times about which he wrote, than a writer on Indians of the eastern colonial frontier would be today. Cooper's books belong to a concept of history and a style of literature prevalent in his day. Today we prefer another approach. And our books reflect our changed attitudes.

The same is true of books on other lands and other people. The viewpoint that once seemed true, the idea that was once acceptable, is no longer right for the modern reader. Yet this does not eliminate the good books from the past. We do not discard *Dobry* and *The Good Master* just because the government has changed in the land where these books were set and life has changed as a result. There are other values in these books that keep them with us. But today they could not be written, at least not in the style in which they were originally done. Today authors write about children in Africa, children in the Far East, and the children of Europe, but the restlessness of the modern world invades them on every page, even when the life they show is many generations old. Yet, even so, they must be and are true, true to the land and true to life there. ,

For all, for books of the past, of the present, and of the future, in writing about other times or other places, the important thing is that the books be as true as knowledge will allow, and that they show people as they were or are, living true lives in a true environment. It is not fair to lie to a child about his history, for it is a part of him; or about other people, for today they, too, are a part of him and will be a larger part. Because we live in a time of rapid communication, thoughtful, time-taking books about other people and even other times are necessary to children, in order that they may orient themselves to their own time and place and accept and appreciate others in theirs.

Just because our times are so crowded with people, places, and problems, today one of the greatest needs is for books of humor. A

book of humor for children is a very special thing and a very difficult book to write. We live in a terrible, serious world. Horrors happen on every side street, and children look down and are only too aware of them. War blocks the main street, and TV tragedies fill the air. The only way through is to achieve a balanced perspective and to retain the ability to laugh at what can be laughed at. Good books of humor cut deep into the heart of common situations and show how really funny they can be—how out of joint, how ridiculous, how incredible, how like people and yet how absurd. The best of children's humor takes a believable situation, places the right kind of character in it—one who will always do what is expected or one who will generally do what is not expected—and lets the situation and the character collide, often with predictable results, the predictability being part of the humor. This may sound somewhat slapstick, and often it is. But when it is Homer Price working at a doughnut machine or Bessie Setzer running a Little League baseball team, the fun is more than slapstick. It is humor making a part of the world livable again, making the behavior of people comprehensible, and it is humor pointing out the remarkable traits of some people that make the day they appear a better day. Humor can also be nonsense that defies the everyday, and it can be exaggeration or understatement that underlines the everyday. But whatever it is, it is controlled and it gives a child pleasure because it confirms his understanding of what is possible and what is not possible by allowing him to discover the ridiculous, himself.

Two other kinds of books that belong in libraries and bookstores and, sometimes, on the home shelves of today are adventure stories and mystery stories. These are not generally known for their depth and insight. Yet they belong. They have been around a long time. *Otto of the Silver Hand*, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* are some of the earlier treasures of this kind of book. And no one can deny their appeal, even today. No one can deny, either, the pleasure they give, the temporary respite they bring from homework, from

the frantic social life of today's children, and maybe even from mother's nagging. They are pure escape, pure recreation. An adventure or mystery story is one that leaves the characters and the reader in a real world, but through the transport of the story the real world is transformed into a place where the unexpected not only can, but does, happen, and where the everyday person not only can, but does, prove himself to be better than he knew—a hero. Like books of humor, we need such books. The better ones have well-developed characters, a convincing background, and even a believable plot. They do not lure their readers with a cliff-hanger at the bottom of every page. Instead they have climaxes that build gradually toward a logical conclusion, and they are girded with a subtle tension that draws the reader on. Sometimes the tension even has the reader looking at the last page of the book far ahead of time because he doesn't know how it is going to end and he can't stand the suspense. This is as it should be for the child who does it. When the tensions of living become too great, and they do for many children, it is a boon to have some place where one can peek and see in advance that everything is going to turn out all right.

Finally, in this brief overview of the kinds of good fiction that children today can read if they choose, there is fantasy. Fantasy is not for every child. There is no point in making the fact-oriented, the overlogical, the everyday-is-enough-for-me kinds of children read fantasy. But for the child who loves it, no other kind of book will be so exciting, no other kind of book will give as many momentary entrees to intuition, no other kind of book can be as absorbing. A good book of fantasy creates a world of its own, one with careful and recognizable rules. It has its own limits, and it stays within them. The extent of these limits depends on the scope of the book. But whatever the outside scope, the depth must be limitless. A fantasy is generally like a well, narrow but deep. At its deepest, it exhibits ideas that are too old to express in any way but through a story that merely casts a shadow of what the truth itself is. Fantasy

creates a world apart in order that it may touch more fittingly and more richly on the great unknowns of spirit, soul, and universal mechanics that lie all around us. Like other great books of the past, the great fantasies of other days do not die. But because each new generation perceives a little more of the great truths that lie on the perimeter of understanding, new fantasies are always needed. The best fantasies, though they deal in immutable truths, are genuinely fresh and new. They spring with enormous vitality from authors who themselves seek the answers to the mysteries they see around them. The fantasies of Tolkien, of C. S. Lewis, and of Lucy Boston, to mention only a few, are all different. Each approaches his new world in a different way. Tolkien plunges into Middle Earth with no introduction from the present. We are reading a history that contains many kinds of heroism and rare treasures of an epic scale. C. S. Lewis takes his children of the World War II era into Narnia and out again by what are strange and yet believable magic means—at least believable if you believe in magic at all. And in Narnia the children find great adventure and worthwhile glimpses into the nature of man. Lucy Boston finds her magic in an old house at Green Knowe. What happens, happens there, but the implications of what happens can make children everywhere wonder where their own Green Knowe may lie. These are three examples. There are many more. And each, if it is good, is unique.

Fiction is important for children because it helps them gain experience they could not otherwise have or might not want to have. Books take children to other countries, other aspects of society, other times in history. Fiction can help children face their own problems in the problems and solutions of others. Not every book will do this for every child, of course. But every once in a while a book will move in and part of it will find a home in a child's real sense of experience. Though fiction should never be regarded as merely a means to this end, or as a way of passing on some trivial morality, some of its possible ends should not be disregarded.

But it is not fiction alone that can bring a child delight, fill him

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with ideas, and send him off on new adventure. Nonfiction can do this too. There is more and more good nonfiction available to children. There are books of nonfiction about every subject imaginable and at all degrees of difficulty. The children who like facts, and there are many of them, have their needs well served these days.

The stimulus to much of the publishing of nonfiction has been the increased use of trade books in the classroom and the increase in the number of school libraries. Teachers want nonfiction to give to children for class assignments, books that are not textbooks but that help children discover ideas rooted in curriculum. Even without this encouragement, there was and there would be nonfiction, however. Children are curious, and the world and TV are so full of questions these days that answers must come from somewhere, and books are one of the best sources.

Nonfiction books concentrate most heavily in the hard core subject areas: social studies, math, and science. Some of these books are quite simple. Beginning social studies books talk about policemen and firemen, about truck drivers, about John who lives on a farm or Mary who lives in the city. From there, the books move to Ragna who lives in Germany, to the machinery of a bread factory, to land forms in the desert, and then on to quite complex subjects such as the stock market, social and economic issues at home and abroad, and other current issues. History, geography, sociology, psychology, are all a part of children's books today. In math, simple counting books give way to books on various counting systems, numbers to many bases, and the theories of calculus. Science books may begin with observations of daisies and clouds for preschoolers, but they end a long ways away: examining quasars, nuclear physics, the composition of the human body, and the construction of rockets and the principles that make them work. Books for children in nonfiction are never on a professional, doctoral level. But children want to know, and they want books that give them real answers, and they get them.

Another aspect of nonfiction often neglected when children's

books are considered are self-improvement and how-to-do-it books. They are stepchildren, in children's books and adult books. They sell, but they are somehow beneath consideration when "children's literature" is discussed. Yet few books can stimulate real creativity in some children more effectively than these. There are some, of course, that say: "Today, children, we are going to make a purple flower in a red flower pot. First draw a flower. Draw a stem one-quarter of an inch wide and three inches high. Color it green. At one inch from the bottom on the right, make a one-inch stem. Draw it out at a right angle from the stem. Draw an oval leaf one-half-inch long at the end of the stem. Color the stem and the leaf green . . ." and on and on through drawing a flower, coloring it purple and cutting it out and making a red flower pot to put it in. Such directions are not creative because they tell too much. But how-to-do-it books that give explicit enough directions to make an item, leaving room for freedom in design and color, in size, and in anything else where freedom is possible, can give just the amount of room to explore that children need. There are children who are natural craftsmen, to whom making something is a joy, and for them a good book can be a better help than a parent or teacher, who may give too much advice and too much help. The same is true of self-improvement books. There are no books that can give exactly the right advice for every child who needs it, but an intelligent book can set many children off in sensible directions to look for the right answers.

Many books today deal with the arts. There was a time when "serious music," fine art, ballet, "serious theater" and so on were held in such awe that books about them for children were stiff and unnatural. They were like the front parlor in an old-fashioned home, meant to be viewed with dignity and at a distance. Today all this has changed. Children hear more good music, play more good music, see more fine art (every city of any size has its museums), and in general have more to do with the arts than ever before. And books

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are helping them enjoy it. Books give them background for what they see and hear. Books tell them about composers and artists. Books give them theory. Books tell them how ideas in the arts develop. And books help children understand that even if they cannot play music or paint a fine picture, they can enjoy the efforts of those who can.

Closely related to all the foregoing, and yet a separate kind of book, is the biography. Biographies, especially in series, have grown like ailanthus trees in Brooklyn. And yet there always seems to be a need for more. There is demand for biography for second graders, a demand for biography in high school, and a demand for it everywhere in between. And children make the demands as well as adults. Biographies for children do not tell all there is to know. A good adult biography of Lincoln or Washington, for example, can run to four or five or more large volumes in small print; few children want to know that much. Instead, a children's biography captures the essence of a life in its true color, and the incidents chosen to convey that essence are true. When a child has finished reading a biography, he may not know all, but what he does know forms an accurate framework for later learnings to build on. Children's biographies cover everyone: presidents, kings, nurses, doctors, ball players, explorers, frontiersmen, military heroes, scientists, humanitarians, poets, priests, artists, novelists, teachers, actors, naturalists. Some children read where their career interests lie. Some read about anyone just because they like biography. For all of them a good biography offers an opportunity to see the grown-up future, with its problems and rewards, and presents a measuring stick of sorts against their own lives and experiences. Every girl deserves the chance to be Clara Barton or Marian Anderson for a bit. And every boy needs to try on George Washington, Thomas Edison, or Jackie Robinson for size.

In recent years among nonfiction books, the familiar essay, almost moribund in adult circles, has returned as a concept book. Little es-

says in picture books acquaint children with ideas. *Fast Is Not a Lady Bug*, their titles say, or, *My Bunny Feels Soft*. Ideally they are books that use words well, that introduce simple but significant ideas, and that make children more aware of the many neighborhoods of life, words, and feeling around them.

And then there are books of source material, generally but not always anthologies. These are most often for older children. They are collections of materials from original sources, bound together by some common thread, that give children close access to the original thinking of people. These can be collections of letters, collections of pieces from diaries, collections of writing from many sources. Well done, these books can be bits of other times or places that one can really reach out and touch. They have an authenticity that almost nothing else can have. Such books must exist for there are those who need to explore in this way.

Close to nonfiction, close to fiction, but really neither, are poetry and drama. These, too, have a place in children's literature. True drama for children is scarce. There are plays made of fairy tales and sometimes of children's books that are presented at special children's theaters. And there are some small books of plays written for children. But honest drama for children is hardly abundant. Yet it deserves to be. All those school performances! Almost every adult remembers with horror some little gem of humorous superficiality or some moral lesson on good behavior that he was forced to be a part of at some time. The play did not teach him anything but to avoid plays. Yet there can be lively, interesting plays for children, plays that will not bore, but will instead help young actors discover what it means to assume the place of another for a bit. Such plays would make sense, they would be interesting to work in, and they would be a challenge to do well. They would also make good reading.

Luckier than drama is poetry. There has always been a reading public for children's poetry, and today it seems to be as great or greater than ever. Little children still hear Mother Goose with plea-

sure. And there are modern poets who write whole books of poetry for children of many ages. In addition there are those who collect and publish anthologies of poetry. On poetry shelves for children there are today many slim volumes and some fairly fat volumes. And children take them out and read them. Children like poetry. They like the swing of it. They like the rhyme of it when it rhymes, although it doesn't have to. They like the brevity of it. They like it especially when they are allowed to enjoy it without having to take it all apart or answer questions that have no relevance as far as they are concerned. Poetry above all is feeling, it is the essence of an experience. Each poet puts down an experience in brief form in full dimension, and each reader re-creates that experience in his own terms. These terms are not always the poet's. Though the poet may have had something specific in mind in his poems, the child need only find what the poem means in his experience. It is a chance for him to match emotions with someone else.

Children's books are poetry, they could be drama, they are fiction of many kinds, they are nonfiction. And all are designed not to teach but to give children interesting experiences. The experience of living in other places and other times, of discovering ideas, of testing emotions, of growing to meet life. They do not preach, they entertain, and they awaken areas of interest that might otherwise be dormant.

Who reads them? Not all children certainly. No good book is designed for every child. No good thing—except home, mother, and country maybe—is good for everyone. And not all children read. Not all children have to. There is no innate magic in reading a book. There is delight, adventure, mind-stretching, and truth seeking for those who can find it. But for some children these wonders lie elsewhere; reading will never bring them to it, so they should not waste their time on books. We don't all have to be alike.

There are enough others who do read. There are children who read continuously and omnivorously—even "close cover before strik-

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ing” on a match case—they chain read. Sometimes such children need to kick the habit a little; reading can be a drug as well as a joy and a release. Other children read copiously but selectively: they read horse books for a year, then move on to mysteries. Still others read sporadically. Many read only for specific purposes when necessary. Yet for all of them, reading, whenever and however they come to it, should never be a chore. It should be a chosen activity. And the books that will give them what they want should be available. If it is Scott or Tennyson, fine. If it is Sara Teasdale or Willa Cather, fine. And if it is Emily Neville, Ed Emberley, William O. Steele, Nat Hentoff, Louise Fitzhugh, John Donovan, or Zilpha Snyder, fine. Children’s books exist for children. And it is their interests, and at the same time their deep needs—their almost unrecognized and unknown but strongly felt searchings—that must be met. For this there must be both depth and variety in what is available.

Who Is the Author?

"All well and good," says the heretic. "So we need children's books because children want books that aren't being written for adults. It all boils down to that, doesn't it? Oh, I know, books that have the idealism of the young and all that. But it amounts to the same thing. And who do you get to write them? Dreary old souls who can't do anything else. That's who."

"Well, not exactly. At least not just the way you put it," says the true believer. "If that's where they had to come from, then there'd never really be any. Not any good ones anyway. Though in a way you may not be so wrong."

"I thought so."

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"But it isn't like that."

"Humph!"

Humph indeed! There are those who think it is so. And there are many who long to prove it so. Dreary souls in dreary corners turning out dreary manuscripts that sometimes become dreary books for unwary children. More often, fortunately, these epics molder and finally die unseen by their proposed audience. True children's books, on the other hand, are written by authors who are young in spirit and venturesome in practice.

All books begin with authors. But those who write for children have three special qualifications: they want to write for children (generally); they do write for children; and they are capable of writing for children. The last is the most important. For if the capability is not there, the wanting and the doing are of little importance. And if the capability is there, the doing and even the wanting may come.

Those who truly want to write for children do not want to do so in order to exhibit superior knowledge, to instruct small minds, to fill small hearts with proper sentiments. These areas are better left to the writers of textbooks, to teachers, and to parents. Nor do they want to write for children because children are so cute and precious and because it is fun to write about fairies and squirrels and the little dog down the street that has learned to carry his bone between his ears. And still further, they do not want to write for children just because they think writing for children is easier than any other kind of writing.

The true author of children's books writes for children because he is what he is. He understands something of what childhood is all about. He sees its problems and its delights. And inside of him, he finds things that interest and are important to the people who are going through one stage or another of childhood. This may be conscious or unconscious. But whichever it is, he writes and what comes out really is for children.

Not all people who think they are writing for children are really doing so. There are those who write about their own childhood or about their parents' childhood, for example, who are simply writing nostalgic bits of sentiment about childhood, which real children cannot share. Others write material that is too complex or too simple, too condescending, too silly, too didactic, or too dull.

On the other hand, not all people who can write for children do it, or do it as well as they might. Some try, sometimes vainly, sometimes successfully, to write for adults instead. Some never find time to put words on paper. Some begin, but do not have perseverance enough to complete the job. Some find it so difficult they cannot face it. Others go on, but skirt the difficulties and do less than their best. And some find a facile vein that suits them and seems easy, and concentrate on it, turning out endless repetitions of themselves, endless static compositions that satisfy no one, not even themselves.

Those who do write for children and do it well are a relatively small group. But they are a capable group. They have, first of all, the skills that permit them to write well. They are able to think through their material and present it in a manner that is appealing to children without condescension or self-consciousness. This, whether they are writing fiction or nonfiction. They can write what they wish with simplicity, directness, and naturalness, without constricting themselves or feeling that they are limiting what they want to say or their natural way of saying things. Their thoughts are for children and their style conveys their thoughts to children gracefully and easily.

These thinking and organizing skills are aided by mature word and language skills. The children's author needs a fine sense of words. Even though the vocabulary used in a children's book may not be so varied as that used in some adult books, each word must be used with care. It must be there because it is the one word that carries all the meaning the author wants to convey. The meaning must be right; the connotation must be right; and the word must

give the proper rhythm to the sentence. The author must know how to create paragraphs that have direction, definition, and unity. It is also helpful if an author knows how to spell and punctuate, and has more than a rudimentary knowledge of grammar. Not all sentences need to be grammatical. But an author should know when he is eschewing grammar and why. Since children are just learning the basics of grammar, it is only fair that they encounter good, though not slavish, examples of it in the books they read.

Thinking and word and language skills are the tools an author brings to his writing. But more important than these is the person he brings, the self he is. For a good author filters the raw material of his writing through himself, and what results will reveal much of what he is. As events he sees or imagines play on the fine distinctions that make up his personality, what emerges in his book are not the events themselves, naked and raw, but what they and his characteristics as a person have together created. If it were possible for two people to experience the same events over a considerable period of time, if both were honest writers using those events in a book, what would emerge from their separate accounts of the same events could not be the same. The filtering device through which the events had passed would be different. The facts would remain the same, but the emphasis would vary. This filtering gives depth, universality, and individuality to a book and is essential to it.

Most editors see many raw facts in every day's incoming mail. There are hundreds, literally, of stories about adopted birds, squirrels, chipmunks, skunks, rabbits, and even foxes and gophers. They are almost all alike. They tell how the poor orphaned baby was found, how it was fed with a medicine dropper or a doll's bottle, how it grew and became a pet, both beloved and mischievous, and finally how it was sent back to the wilds for its own good. The number of children involved may differ, the antics of the creature may differ; but the outline is the same, and the dimensions that would make it more than an amusing experience, that would lift it

out of the ordinary and make it significant, are almost always lacking. The author has been too literal and has not allowed enough of the universal and also of the unique to enter his work. What is true of adopted wild pets is also true of many other common experiences that authors trying to write for children turn into manuscripts.

The good author is more concerned with pattern and scope than he is with conveying specific events faithfully. True events do not necessarily make true stories. Art demands more than faithfulness to real details. It demands a perspective on those details that will give them unity and will place them in the context of a larger pattern of human experience.

Because it is essential that an author's inner sensibilities color and shape his work, it is important that an author for children be the kind of person who can see the world in some ways as children do. The hope that children know, the sense of wonder, of adventure, of attraction to life that are theirs, need not be confined to children and are the elements that help to give the children's author the outlook he needs, the color that infuses his vision. If this basic sympathy does not exist in some form in the mind of the writer, who may be childlike but need not be childish because of it, there can be no common ground on which the child and the writer can meet.

Fortunately not many people have entirely closed the door to wonder and hope. Distorted, depressed, overlaid, and debilitated it often is, but not entirely rooted out. "The child is father of the man," Wordsworth said. And when the man is lucky, the child remains at the core of his existence.

Yet the adult writing for children is not a child. He may remember his childhood, he may observe the childhoods of others, and he may filter his experiences through childlike outlooks to create the framework for what he writes, the ground on which he walks as he writes. Still he is an adult. He has lived longer than children, he has seen more, he has experienced more, and he knows more. He has a

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greater capacity than a child to evaluate what happens to him, to perceive relationships in situations, to reach out to others—for children can be very self-centered people—and to understand complex events. His capacity for learning and for using his mind are no greater than those of a child; he has simply had more time to stuff information into his mental computer so that more answers to more questions, and more questions that cannot be answered, are fed to him. But this is not a detriment. To perceive events in a childlike way is no more important to a children's author than to perceive them with truth and discrimination. A child does not always have the experience to judge the truth of a book for himself, so he has a right to expect that a book will be as true as an author can make it. Books children read can become a part of what they know, a part of their own body of experience, and therefore what they read should be true, lest they act on false knowledge.

Truth in a book is the essence of an author's sum total of experience with any given set of circumstances and the ideas he draws from that total experience balanced against the sum total of all other experiences with similar circumstances he can discover outside himself. Some of this comes from conscious thinking and testing, and some comes from deep rivers of unremembered experiences that rise to his consciousness, that seem valid and age-old, and that test true in living as he sees and knows it.

The author of nonfiction will most likely search for truth in his active experience. If he writes a book on chemistry, he will choose the area of chemistry he wants to present. From his own experience with that part of chemistry, he will organize his thinking, determine his direction; then he will test his ideas and read and check to reinforce his own experience. When he finishes his book, he will check further with the best authorities he knows to make sure that his view of truth in chemistry is consistent with other views. If he is writing in a highly experimental or controversial area of chemistry, however, he may find disagreement about where truth lies. Then he

must assess all that is known, and from his own experience judge where truth is. How well he does this will depend on the breadth of his own experience and on his capacity to judge the abilities of others to isolate the truth.

The author of fiction lives in a realm where truth is even more difficult to determine than in nonfiction, for he deals with truth in human relationships and in the outreaches of the human mind, and these truths are always complex and difficult to establish. The situation he chooses to present, or that presents itself to him from the deep areas of the mind where many happenings have been unconsciously synthesized into a new and fresh event, will generally be characteristic of a situation that occurs often; but it will be unique too. For if he sees it as himself, he will see it in a way no one else can. Nevertheless, truth will be there, even in his unique viewpoint. The truth lies in both the abstract of the situation and in the author's viewpoint. The first is a universal truth, the second is a personal truth. It takes an author who can mingle both to make a great, creative piece of fiction.

Universal truth comes out of the total experience of the race of man. It is a distillation of wisdom about broadly recurring events in lives lived everywhere and in all times. In childhood, the experiences of growing and learning themselves are abstract and universal. The specific learnings may differ, but the pain of learning, the joy of learning, the fears and hopes of growing are felt everywhere. Though the outward forms of society may differ, the loves and tensions that build between parents and children, for example, have certain universal aspects. Relationships between children in a family—between older children and younger children, between children of the same age—fall into some universal patterns. Some such patterns may be seen on the surface, but there are also deeper and more subtle patterns that only the most perceptive see. Good authors see both the surface and the subsurface and suggest both in what they write.

Around these abstract truths of human experience grow varying

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cultural, epochal, and individual viewpoints. Each generation sees truth in a little different light. What sometimes appears to be a complete change in social mores from one generation to another is really only the same old truth dressed in a new outlook. Today's concern that a child adjust well to his peer group does not differ essentially from the pressures on a boy in an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century English public school or from the stern demands of the Puritans that children behave like small adults. It is only the peripheral demands that differ. The central requirement is still that a child adjust himself to the spirit and the mind of the group that surrounds him. And in all these situations there are conformists and rebels. The good author sees this, and yet he knows that yesterday's children are not simply today's children dressed in different clothes, and that the children to come will differ from children of today. And he knows that he can look at these differences from a viewpoint that is his alone and present a true book that is true both as man knows it and as he alone sees it.

The work of such an author will have abstract truth as its central and most important gem. The fire and splendor of this truth will permeate and direct the entire work. But giving shape to the whole and adding luster and meaning to the abstract truth will be the more personal truths, those that stem from the author's own viewpoint and experiences. They will give the work a time and a place and a sense of individuality. They will also give the work a movement and a quality of intimate reality that the glitter of abstract truth alone cannot do.

Because books must reflect an individual, good books come only from people with interesting things inside of them. Some authors may not appear to be interesting people. They may be quiet and withdrawn. They may not express their ideas well when they speak. Yet somewhere inside a diamond flashes. It lights up interests, it gathers incidents to it, it broadcasts value.

Authors can also be people who have obviously had interesting

lives, of course. But whether they are or not, they generally have not chosen the events that eventually become the framework for their books, nor are they entirely responsible for the viewpoints they have developed. Most people do not really choose even the major things that happen to them. Those who think they know exactly what they want to be and train for it can often wind up being something else. Elaine Konigsburg trained to be a chemist and found she was a writer, a good enough one to win the Newbery Award. An artist who illustrates children's books was once a successful lawyer. Teachers go into business. Experts in business administration become librarians. Many more people accept a job that is vaguely related to the career they thought they wanted, but that leads them further and further into things they never would have thought of or perhaps never knew existed. Even the person one marries depends on where one is and who else is there. So it is that people with a talent for writing may have all sorts of adventures that they do not choose merely as fodder for their writing but that eventually prove to be just that.

Yet there are solid souls who know just what they want and who push ahead with great determination to achieve it. They want to write, and they want to write about exotic experiences, so they cultivate experiences. Writers of this kind, along with photographers, can be among the world's most-traveled people. They hunger for rare adventure. Like Stanley setting out to find Livingston, they delve into the unknown—geographically, scientifically, historically, or even literarily. And they go where they go deliberately, and they come out with what they need for a book. Yet if they are good authors, the experiences they have had never become matter-of-fact, routine books to fill out a predetermined pattern. The author lets abstract truth evolve from his adventures before he sets his personal experiences down.

Still another category of understanding and book beginnings exists. It does not lie in physical experience at all. It is the experience

of the person who seems to have no experience. The experience of the person who observes others, who reads widely, and considers carefully. It is possible to live in the same house and the same town all one's life, to venture seldom beyond a twenty-mile radius, to see few other people, and to actually experience few events outside of ordinary family happenings, and still to write well and creatively. The life of Emily Dickinson comes close to being this circumscribed. And there are undoubtedly others. Such people are circumscribed physically but not mentally. Their minds range widely, they learn to know well the people they do see, and they analyze people and events in depth and detail. Their ideas are sure and strong. Such people must be gifted indeed to succeed; but when they do, they can be genuine inventors, for they are not subjected to the normal pressures of society to conform to an accepted or stylish mode of writing and thinking.

Whatever the sources of experiences that make up an author's background, sought or unsought, arrived at physically or in thought only, they do not become a book until they have percolated through the author's mind into a brew that is strong enough and tasty enough to interest others. Small incidents can take on great significance in the hands of an accomplished writer with something to say. And great events can be reduced to the inconsequential when the writer is not fit to handle his material. The difference again lies in the writer himself and in his approach to his work. It takes not only a mature person with unique inner experiences but a person of fine purposes and discrimination to write a good book. It takes someone who is not afraid to look at himself—at his world and at the ideas he has had and has cherished—with a mind looking for truth and not for comfortable reassurance. It takes courage to write an honest book of any kind. It takes a special kind of courage to write one for children, for with children one must be especially honest. Children are quicker to see sham and pretense than an adult. Adults sometimes prefer to be deceived, demand to be deceived, rather than face

truth. Most children have not yet learned to be so self-deceptive. The author cannot cover up what he would rather hide.

Yet the author who is searching for truth is not often aware of the discomfort he is enduring. As someone once said, "The martyr who knows he is a martyr is no martyr at all." The author who writes well, whether he writes for children or adults, is oftentimes pursuing a need within him. There is a drive within him that makes him write, that makes him seek for truth. And even though writing is painful sometimes, it is more painful to be without it. Many authors hate to come to the end of a book, no matter how they have complained about the agonies of giving birth. And few authors can finish one book and not start another one soon. For most authors writing is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Writing is life for two reasons. First it is an extension of an author's own real life; and in some cases it is more than that, it is the place where he most truly lives. As an author creates a book, whether it is fact or fiction, he becomes a part of it and it becomes a part of him—the destinies of the two are bound together for a little while. And while they are, both are benefiting. The author is enlarging himself. He is pushing himself into something. He is experiencing a new thing as surely as he experiences the waters of the Pacific when he goes for a swim on Catalina Island, or the sounds and shocks of today when he plunges himself into New York's Electric Circus. At the same time the work is absorbing life from the reality and vitality of the author. Like a parasite, it sucks him clean of ideas, of perceptions, of viewpoint and physical energy until it has a life of its own. The time comes eventually when the work is done. The two are parted. Yet they are never wholly divorced. For the experience the writing gave adds to the writer's total body of experience. And the book remains always as an expression of at least a part of what the author was at a time and a place in his life. It is a bit of what he is crystalized forever at a moment of his existence. He will, if he lives on, grow out in other directions, but the book

will always be he as he was. Like William Cullen Bryant's chambered nautilus, the shell is left behind, a useful object, one that can give shelter and dimension to others who encounter it. But the author has gone on; and if he is lucky, he is building bigger and better shells that encompass a richer and deeper life.

This can happen only if the author knows something about liberty, however, and is willing to accept it and even to pursue it. Liberty begins first for an author when he accepts the idea that he is free to write what he wants to write in the way he wants to write it. No author who holes himself up in an artificial shelter created by outside arbiters of taste or, for that matter, by his own inhibitions can realize the liberty an author must assume for himself. The author's mind must find itself at liberty to choose its subject and to develop that subject freely, changing preconceived ideas when necessary and coming up finally with a book that seems right and whole. Many things work to destroy this liberty. The author fears that his subject will not be popular. Friends look with alarm at his idea, editors even. The author's own inner shields tempt him to cover over thoughts that he thinks it might not be politic or comfortable to reveal. And sometimes these warnings may be right. The subject may not be salable. The author's ideas may be seeds of disaster. The whole business, if it becomes a book, may indeed be rejected by others. Yet the author with a sense of liberty will know that he can do as he pleases, regardless of what may happen; and he will write his book if he decides to do so. But if he decides not to do it, he will be free enough to do something else instead.

Yet the good author knows that although he is free to pursue his ideas, he is not free to violate truth, to negate his own vision, or to circumscribe the freedom of his characters or his material. No author is at liberty to destroy the thing he creates. Freedom is not license. Once an author has created the bounds in which he has chosen to work, he cannot deface them. He may change his mind and re-create his boundaries; but if he does, all he writes must fall within

and be consistent with the new limits. An author who chooses to write a book on the making of a concrete sidewalk can discuss the composition of concrete, the mixing of concrete, the width of a proper sidewalk, the proper foundation for a sidewalk, the reasons for cracks in a sidewalk, and related matters. But he may not discuss the composition of macadam, the reason for the line down the middle of a street, or the varying designs for lampposts; not unless he can find a valid reason for bringing these in. The author of fiction who is telling the story of how Johnny and Jane made a fountain in the backyard with stray lumber, stray pipes, a garden hose, and some string and won the city backyard beautification contest cannot tell about Johnny and Jane on a winter trip to Mont Blanc. He can't unless the fountain was designed to look like Mont Blanc, unless the contest was first announced there, or unless the two first met there and in a long story made their way to the fountain and triumph. And Johnny and Jane must be people with enough character that they do not act just like the twins Frank and Frances, who live next door. In fact, Johnny and Jane must be alive enough that if, when they begin to live their story, some of the things the author thought would happen can't happen because Johnny and Jane wouldn't do them, then Johnny and Jane must be free enough to be themselves and the author must be at liberty to change his mind.

And finally an author who recognizes his own need for liberty must also be able to recognize the need of others for liberty. If he has created a true and honest work, when he leaves it to go on to other things and readers come in to explore what he has written, the reader too must be free to find what he will and interpret things as he sees them. Each reader will bring different experiences to a book and a different personality and will take away a little different idea. The author should know that this is as it should be, and should not insist upon passages in his work that insure a specific interpretation of what he has written, unless he is writing a highly technical work.

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All of this, the finding of life and the giving of life and the enjoyment of liberty, can make for the pursuit of happiness for the right person, for the true author. Most good authors are people who need to explore in this way, who are never satisfied with the limits of truth as they have seen them, but who are always searching for the new that lies just beyond. Happiness is not holding a finished product, but wanting something and pursuing it. The thing beyond is always the best—the next book is the masterpiece. And searching for it, not finishing it, is the joy.

The author who seeks in this way generally is not an author whose abiding aim in life is to fill little minds with high ideals. Similarly, a good author is not determined to display his own knowledge and talent at the expense of all else. There are good authors who are more teachers than seekers and there are authors who pour out information. But their motive is not to ram information or moral rules down the throats of unwary victims. Instead, they feel an enormous enthusiasm for an idea and cannot help trying to give others what they have. In nonfiction they explode with fascinating information, and in fiction they convey delicate insights into the life they see around them with grace and taste.

What the true author has to give, whether he be seeker or teacher, comes from the same place—from himself, his experiences, and the ideas they generate. Essentially no author has anything but himself to give. But the good author knows how to give himself and how much of himself to give. And he knows how to give it to today's children. He is attuned to the young.

The story an author of today tells is never a repetition of something done fifty years ago, or even ten years ago. *Little Women* was modern a hundred years ago. It is still read with interest. But no author with a grip on today, where every living author's grip ought to be, could write such a book now. Even such a seemingly timeless book as *The Wind in the Willows* belongs to its own time. There are attempts to write similar books now—and some of these are

technically quite good—but they do not ring wholly true. Our day is different. We can enjoy the adventures of Ratty, Toad, and Mole still, but we need something else as the product of our times.

Just what our times will produce of lasting value depends on our authors, on the ones who are responsive to the mood of our day and yet see truth as it will always be. The author who is responsive to the day in which he lives enjoys it though it be filled with terrors and alarms, disasters and distress. He knows the challenge of his day and is willing to accept it. He is not afraid of the future; he does not regret the passing of the past; and he contributes as much as he can of the best of what he is to the climate of each day.

This is what an author for children in our time must be. He cannot rely on patterns and experiences of the past, nor copy the success of others. He cannot even feel that what he did yesterday is good enough for now. He cannot lose hope and wonder. He dare not decide that he is complete, that he need not grow as a person any more. He cannot stop seeking life, seeking truth, seeking joy, seeking with hope the next book that will be better than any that has gone before. He cannot stop trying to discover what it is that will crystallize the essence of the now to give it to children, a generation not his own.

The author of children's books faces the most difficult task of any author writing, for he is leaping over the much talked about generation gap, carrying himself and what he is to the generation that will lead the world when he is gone, and that may scorn him for a time in its maturing years. It is no easy thing to be timeless, timely, and a generation ahead of your time and to tie it all up into a well-written book that has entertainment value as well as deep insights for those who want them.

Yet there are authors who do succeed in all this. They are young in age and old in age. They are men and women. They are teachers, librarians, housewives, doctors, lawyers, editors, artists, plumbers, farmers; they include some of all who are literate. And whatever

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their background, they succeed in being people who can do what they must to create a children's book. They are the young in spirit whatever their age. They are the courageous, though they have never left home. They are among the Pied Pipers of our times, and they are leading our children not into a mountain doorway but onto a mountaintop where they need not be funneled into one dark tunnel, but may choose a direction from all that man has learned.

Ideas onto Paper

How does a good author begin his book?

That is a legitimate question, and one that every author himself has to answer. For all, it means at some time putting down one word and then another on paper. But for some, this is preceded by great amounts of research or the preparation of carefully noted plans with outlines and précis and sample pages. Then there are those for whom it simply means beginning on the first page with the first word the future reader will read. For others, it means writing a key passage, the watershed of the book, the focal point of all that comes before and after. For still others, it means writing the very last paragraph toward which all that goes before must move.

Yet for all of these, whatever the first physical step may be, the real first thing is the idea, the problem, the core.

The idea for a particular book may come from any one of a number of places. It may rise as a surprise into the conscious mind of the author from his underground thinking. It may suggest itself suddenly from some outside stimulus—a newspaper article, a chance comment by a friend, the suggestion of an editor, a situation witnessed. It may come about after long thought, out of firmly held opinions. It may come as the result of a lifetime of work.

Whatever its source, the idea will seem natural and interesting to the author. It will present problems of thought, development, and presentation he wants to solve. If other work prevents him from exploring the idea for a while, he will be impatient, longing to finish what he is working on so he can get to new and fresher things. From the time the idea captures him, he is made aware of it daily by incidents, newspaper articles, casual comments, and even books that relate to what he has in mind. Everything seems suddenly to have some relationship to his developing thoughts. In short, the author has fallen in love. And like all people in love, he sees his beloved mirrored in even the most remote images.

Gradually the author comes to know his idea better. In some cases he is ferreting the material out of himself, delving into himself to find out what is there. Both fiction and nonfiction can be written in this way. In fiction the story presents itself to the author's conscious mind and gradually reveals itself as the author explores it, either by writing it or by thinking it through. In nonfiction the philosopher, mathematician, or scientist may ponder problems that have never been solved, seek answers to questions that have never been asked, or attempt to phrase material in ways it has never been stated before; and as his thinking develops, as he moves one step at a time to develop his idea, it grows and matures. In other cases, authors learn more about their ideas by research. Maybe a fragment of an old song has imbedded itself in an author's mind. He can't get rid of

the phrases. They suggest a period of the past, a way of life, and the shadows of people he would like to know. So he reads widely, both fiction and nonfiction. And as he reads, the time and place begin to live for him. Certain kinds of people and finally certain specific characters begin to take shape. Events that might have involved these people become clear. And eventually, from research and the snatch of a song, a book begins. For another example, a history teacher suddenly understands why some previously unexplained change took place in the tactics of a general or a politician or other leader. The teacher begins to read widely about the person or persons involved. He explores the time. And if the idea stands the test of research, a book may begin. Another author with an idea may need to do physical research. He may need to travel somewhere or carry through some special piece of experimentation to discover where his idea leads. *And Now Miguel* could not have had its intense feeling of a place and a people had not Joe Krumboltz been to the area he wrote about and known the people he re-created in his story.

Once an idea has developed enough to need definition, the author has decisions to make. What form shall his book take? Some ideas present themselves in obvious ways. A book about the geography of Afghanistan is a nonfiction book. No amount of sugarcoating to make a story of it will ever make it more than nonfiction. So it should be written as straight nonfiction. The writing will be easier, and the reader will find it more pleasant. A subtle and inviting tale about a girl who goes down a rabbit hole and finds an absurdly fascinating world below can never be anything but fiction. And a momentary insight that catches the resemblance between a city seen from an airplane just after dark and the Milky Way is probably poetry. But there are other things that are not clear-cut. An author enamored of certain parts of the Napoleonic period might want to do a biography in depth of Napoleon or of whichever of his ladies was enthroned at the time. Or the writer might choose to do a book of

fiction set in the time. Or he could do a nonfiction book relating to certain episodes of the period. The decision depends on the author's capabilities, his interests, the material he has to work with, and the aspect of the period he wants to explore.

A good author has some sense of his ability as an author that helps him decide how he will handle his material. He may never have tried verse, or he may never have written biography. Yet he does know, of the things he has done, something of what he does well. Wordsworth may not have known which of his poems were good and which were bad, but he knew he was a poet. Modern writers, too, have some idea of what they are and what they can do. If, however, an author finds that an idea has driven him to a medium he has not tried before, as sometimes happens, he will move cautiously but will not refuse to do what is required. He will test himself. He will write a few pages, let the results sit for several days, and then read the work again to see how it sounds. He may even consult a friend he trusts. For it is best not to spend too much time doing something one cannot do. Yet an author will never know just how much he can do until he explores all the possibilities. There is no point in not trying a book just because it asks for something different, something new. A good author is venturesome in new beginnings, but prudent as well.

The author whose ideas do not require the development of new techniques or skills will soon scent where best pursuit of his ideas lies. And he will know if he can do it. Sometimes then, as soon as the idea or the research is ready, an author will begin to write. Other authors plot and plan much longer. Whichever way an author begins, the idea will remain, a tantalizing vision, beckoning him on. He may even see constantly ahead the finished book, full and perfect, the great American children's book. Fulfillment seldom equals the robust dream of beginning, yet the dream is part of what makes the book possible at all.

Once the writing begins, the love affair between the author and his idea has become a marriage, and even the honeymoon is quickly over. Writing is hard work. Experienced authors know this before they begin. New authors soon learn. Putting one word after another is not as easy as putting one foot after another. After all, each human being has only two feet and there is no choice involved. But there are endless words to choose from, and getting the right one every time, the one that catches just the right nuance of meaning, requires thought, the most difficult of all exercises. Actual writing is like pushing back a heavy wall, a wall that can't be seen and yet is there. Good writing is pushing back a wall because it is venturing into the unknown, regardless of the author's topic or skill.

The one weapon with which an author can arm himself for his task is a knowledge of his own writing skills. He can know something about the way he uses language and how it affects readers. He can know something about sentence structure and sentence rhythm as he normally uses it. He can know what level of difficulty he writes at most naturally and gear his book to the audience that can best read him. And he can relax in his writing. There is nothing that defeats an author's work more quickly than an attempt to be a self-conscious stylist; to be unnatural in order to seem like someone else; or to write about a subject that demands an unfamiliar style. An unnatural style almost always reads like hard work. And good writing, no matter how hard it actually has been for the author, generally sounds easy and unforced.

An experienced author writes in the manner that suits him best out of sheer self-preservation. He knows that even if he is going to succeed, he is going to have problems enough without creating artificial ones. No book moves ahead with unrestrained speed from beginning to end if the author is truly involved in his writing. On the whole it may go quickly, but there will always be moments of panic along the way when things do not seem to be moving as they

should, and in those moments the author who is at home with language, though his ideas seem to flounder, will be best able to carry on.

How authors actually approach the difficult task of putting down words varies. Some use a typewriter. Some use a pencil or pen; perhaps they like the tactile sense of making the words appear in a form they recognize as belonging to them individually—it makes the writing more personal. And some talk into a tape recorder. Most determined writers have an organized plan of attack. If they are full-time writers they may spend certain specific hours of the day in writing. Elaine Konigsburg writes in the morning, as soon as her husband has left for work and her children for school. She does not answer the telephone. She does not wash the dishes or make the beds. She writes until noon and reserves the afternoon for household chores and social responsibilities. Another author writes for two hours or so each morning. He has so trained his subconscious mind that he can direct it to explore in certain directions after one day's writing, and the next day he has two hours' worth of steady writing ready and waiting for him. Some authors write better at night. An author with a family writes for two or three hours each night after everyone else has gone to bed. Other people set other goals: a specific number of words or pages a day; a chapter completed by a preset deadline; a given portion of a book done by a given date. It is essential for most authors to set some pattern of work, and to set some kind of goal and sometimes some kind of limit for themselves. An author with no reasoned-out approach to his work can flounder around and do nothing. An author with too much time can squander it. An author with too little time can feel that nothing can be done in so little time and never begin. Good writers take their work seriously. They do not wait for inspiration to strike because they know that inspiration springs more often to minds actively at work on a project than to restless minds that have no object. At the same time, authors do not worry if things some-

times go slowly or seem difficult. They do not worry if they tear up all of yesterday's work today. The important thing is to keep at it.

As an author writes, he may proceed in any of a number of ways. One author may barrel right through a book beginning with the first word and racing on through to the end. He may do this at an even, measured pace, a bumpy pace, or a dashing, frantic pace. When he is through, he will have at least a skeleton, and he may have much more than that, a nearly completed sculpture that requires only some sanding and polishing to make it acceptable. There will be holes; there will be repetition; there will be incoherent passages; and there will be disjointed transitions. Yet chances are, there will be a good basic unity and the whole will bring the initial idea to life.

Another author will work more carefully as he goes. He will study each word, each sentence, each paragraph. And he will re-write each chapter until it is perfect before he goes on to the next. When he finishes, he will have a neatly polished work that may be as perfect as he can make it. But it may also need some revision for unity. And in the labored process of development the idea may have lost some of its initial life and enthusiasm. But if this is the way the author prefers to work, the results will be the best expression of himself that is possible.

A third author may write piecemeal. He will develop episodes, chapters, sequences as each part seems to him to be ready for writing. Gradually the book takes shape, parts fall into place, transitions are created, and finally, if all things work properly, the pieces are all united and a whole has been created from the puzzle of the parts. He too may find a need for better transitions or there may be gaps in the structure. Yet if this is his way, it is the right procedure for him to follow.

There may be as many ways of actually getting down to writing a book as there are authors. There are also, probably, as many approaches to personal involvement. An author is, of course, involved

in choosing his subject, in developing his idea. But there is a deeper personal involvement, a commitment of self to an idea, that must also be achieved if a good book is going to be written. The nature of this personal involvement can range all the way from the very close emotional association with his subject of an author writing about his childhood, to the keen desire of the writer of a book on the development of the Indo-European language to make clear the basis for scientific assumptions that such a language existed and the relevance of such knowledge to our own times.

At one extreme an author may be viewing the whole from inside himself, writing all he writes from out of his thoughts and personality. He is in a sense completely subject to his material, held within it, and it is completely subject to him, held within him. There is no perspective here, no distance between the writer and his work. It is all one.

At the other extreme the author may choose one area of an external specialty or interest, something that grasps him intellectually. He then zooms down upon his objective, captures it in a book, and puts it out for others to enjoy in much the same way he enjoys it, as a pleasant toy, or more than that, as an area of living that one derives profit or pleasure from finding illuminated. He is writing from the outside. He sees his subject whole, for what it is. He can examine it like an amoeba under a microscope in all its fineness and its faults and present every side of it. He displays himself and his involvement through his interest, his viewpoint, his choice of subject.

Between these two extremes are many gradations. Which an author chooses for any one book depends partly on his subject and partly on what he is as a person and as a writer. He can fail, as he can succeed, at either.

And so the author has his idea, he knows what form it will take, he knows the pattern in which he will work, and he cares about his subject enough to want to do the very best job of writing he can. He has begun to put words on paper. It remains only to follow the

dream to completion. Yet not all people who begin books end them. Not all books that are ended come out fulfilling the author's magnificent dream at the start. In fact, few do. There are many reasons why, for there are many hidden traps for even the most wary of authors. Dreaming up a book, conjuring a fine vision, can raise a sort of pseudo-ecstasy; but living through the writing of the book can be quite another thing.

The first and most obvious problem that an author may encounter is a discovery that his idea was a poor one and simply does not work. What may have seemed a sound enough structure to begin on may fall apart when it is explored with a pencil. An idea for a book of nonfiction may turn out to be too ambitious. It may prove to be impossible, for example, to tell the history of the world in a third-grade vocabulary and in sixty-four manuscript pages. Or an idea may not be ambitious enough. A proposed exhaustive work for junior-high-age young people on the story of "The Star-Spangled Banner" may go begging for information beyond the first hundred pages, unless a good deal of extraneous information is introduced. A fiction plot that seemed workable may turn dull halfway through or may require in its logical development such complicated interactions that even the author, let alone a possible reader, cannot sort them out. Poor ideas are born every day, and the good author discovers when he has a poor one as quickly as he can.

Other ideas may not be really bad but just misguided or inadequate. If an author's research is poor, or if the information he needs proves to be unavailable, or if he is not capable of grappling with his material, he may fail. Almost every book requires some outside source of knowledge. The author must at least check the accuracy of what he thinks is so. And somewhere along the way he may discover that he does not know enough and cannot discover enough about his subject to continue, that something he was sure was true is not true, or that the basic events upon which his work is based are bigger than he is and he cannot cope with them. His initial re-

search did not reveal the flaws in his thinking or knowledge, but the difficulties he ran into along the way did.

Or an author may discover partway through a book that the basic premise for his book is inadequate. He may find, for example, if he is writing a book on the peculiarities of Australian fauna for seven-year-olds, that he cannot compare the creatures of Australia with creatures found elsewhere because his proposed audience finds supposedly common creatures as uncommon as the Australian ones. For a seven-year-old city child he must describe cows and horses and pigs, as well as koala bears, platypuses, echidnas, and wallabies. He can write his book on Australian creatures as a book about interesting animals if he likes, but only if he presents them matter-of-factly and does not go beyond comparisons with dogs and cats and maybe guinea pigs and white mice. Or an author may begin another kind of book assuming that one aspect of it will be the most important part only to discover that he has misjudged his subject and the emphasis is in the wrong place. An author writing a book of fiction about a boy swept up in the Children's Crusade may write at great length and with great fervor about the trials of getting over the mountains and down to the ships, thinking to end his book with the disaster of slavery, only to realize that what could follow, planned as a short epilogue, might well be the most interesting and exciting part of the book. An author in this dilemma must either accept what he has done or cut the beginning and go on—a hard decision to make either way.

Other authors begin to write and find halfway through that the style they are using or the tone they have effected is wrong. Suddenly a book of fiction begun in the third person demands to be a first person narrative, or vice versa. A blood-curdling saga of the West develops into a book with greater depth, and the war whoops and thunder of the first part demand rethinking. Or a physicist writing a book on spinning tops—how and why they work—for nine-year-olds finds himself automatically writing in the scientific

jargon he would use with his fellow scientists, and must reconsider his language or his ability to write for children.

All of these faults come from poor visualization of the subject initially. Sometimes this is the fault of the author, sometimes it is not. Many books do not reveal their whole nature until an author is well into them. Many books must be begun before their full scope can be realized. Sometimes the characters in a book of fiction take over the plot and bend it in new ways, making demands on the author he never dreamed would have to be met. All a good author can do is anticipate as many problems as he can, know when he has a problem, and try to know when he can cope with his problem and when he cannot.

As the book progresses, every author of fiction must deal with plot, characters, background, tone of the narrative, style, and viewpoint, and he must keep them all blending, all in balance; or if they are not in balance, he must know why they are not and what is being accomplished by the lack of balance. Some of this will be almost instinctive, a part of the initial conception or of the story itself as it develops, some of it must be consciously handled, but all parts must seem equally related and at ease in the finished work. Every author of fiction knows moments in every book when it seems as if this is not going to happen.

The author of nonfiction needs to have a sense of organization; he needs to see how things fit together to make a logical whole, where they begin and where they end. And every author of nonfiction finds some bit in every book that belongs and yet does not belong, or some hole that must be filled and yet almost cannot be filled in the scope of his work. Handling these rough spots separates the skilled author from the unskilled.

The good author must have discipline to work and diligence to perfect. When something goes off the track, he must sense it as soon as he can and be willing to go back and rewrite to get things moving smoothly again. There is no reason for any author to think that

what will just do will ever be good enough. Only the right word, the right sequence, used in the way the author senses is right for the whole, regardless of how much work this may entail, is good enough.

Discipline and diligence also demand self-denial. An author must sublimate his own vanities and vices to the good of his book. If a pet phrase does not belong, it must go. The author who has done his homework in advance and who longs to have his hand up with the answers all the way through the book must be content with not telling all he knows, if the book does not need it all. Authors who fall so much in love with their style or a character or something else in what they are writing that they can't bear to end their work or to change it must nevertheless stop when the end is reached, or change when change is called for. All authors in the course of a book must exercise self-denial. The author serves his book as much as it serves him, and he should not force on it more of himself or of what he knows than it can bear.

When is a book finished? When the end is reached, obviously. And where the end is, the material itself must determine. It is the place where the essence of the work is over, what summing up is needed has been done, and the reader knows what he has seen and what he has not seen, and can be left free to go on as he chooses.

A book of fiction generally begins at a place where the main action of the book is still offstage—but not very far offstage. It may be felt on the first page. The action steps up in a slow curve until there is a large hump where the climax occurs, and then it falls quickly off and the end comes. Along the way up there may be waves in the large curve, small climaxes that build larger and larger until finally the main climax occurs. But there are few waves on the way down. The end comes quickly. This is generalization, of course, and many books do not follow this exact pattern. But the author who discovers along the way that he is creating a series of slight, equal climaxes, building along a straight line, is in trouble. He is tacking together

episodes, not making a unified book, and he may never come to a reasonable end. On the other hand, the author who finds himself with too many climaxes of too intense a nature is in equal trouble. The day of the Saturday afternoon movie serial is over. This author's ending, whatever it is, cannot help but be unsatisfying or anticlimactic.

The author of nonfiction chooses his area, his topic. He introduces it, tells the reader what he is going to write about, or gives the reader some sort of entry into the subject; then he does what he promised to do, carrying the reader on into the body of the material; and he ends when he has told all he needs to tell and has given the reader a summary of what has been said. This, too, is a generalization. It all depends on the subject. But whatever the subject, the book is over, or should be over, when the author has covered his material in sufficient depth and in adequate scope for his intended audience.

When a book is finished, the author generally feels a glow of achievement. It's done. What a relief! And yet, for many there is a feeling of sadness. The book may have been a hard taskmaster, but it was also a pleasant companion, a familiar presence, and it is something to be missed.

Writing the last word of the page, or filling in the last gap between episodes, or whatever the last chink of the first draft is, is not finishing a book, however. What happens next depends on the writer. Hazlitt, the master of the English essay style, it is said spent ten years in the country, writing. He wrote daily, revised and rewrote and polished, and then threw away what he had written—for ten years. At the end of ten years he had so perfected his style that when he wrote something, he could feel confident that it said just exactly what he wanted it to say, in just the way he wanted to say it. Whether this is true or not, few authors today have the time, patience, money, or will to spend ten years tearing up everything they write. Therefore, they probably need to revise.

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Just as no one can really tell an author how to write—what style to use, how to pace his work, or how to develop his idea—neither can anyone tell him how to revise. All one can say is that he must check what he has done to make sure it has unity; he must see that there are no gaping holes, no awkward transitions, no forcing together of ideas that only seem to be related. He must make sure that his style is consistent and happy with his material. He must cut out the things that have crept in and do not belong.

The beginning of rewriting is rereading. And rereading is most often done first with an eye to large matters—the places where the initial dream is realized and the places where it is not. And then may come some rethinking that may reshape the work to bring the poorer areas into line with the best. Once this is done, the finer polishing of words and sentences and details can be done. But this is only one way of working; there are others that work well for those who use them.

Adequate rewriting is never just patching, especially not patching with a different material. Filling in gaps, bridging over awkward transitions, can be tricky; the work can be only too obvious unless enough is done to make the new as firmly a part of the whole as the old. The competent author is a skillful solderer.

Revision can also involve moving. One hunk of material upon rereading can clearly belong somewhere else, and it must be bodily lifted up and put where it ought to be. It generally takes more than scissors and paste to accomplish this. At the least it takes repairing of the rent where the piece was lifted and a preparing of the way for it in the new location.

For many authors this task of rewriting, revising, and polishing a book is a problem. When they have finished a first draft, they are weary and want it to be done. Further work is true drudgery, though most of them do it. For others, the first draft is the drudgery and the polishing is the work they enjoy, producing a finely

crafted finished product. And for a few revising is a mania. There are authors who do not know when to stop. They revise until they have revised every vestige of life and vigor from their work. Each perfected sentence is one more dead sentence. There is a time to revise, and a time to stop revising. And the wise author knows when each has come.

Eventually, however the author feels about revising, whatever work seems needed is done. Then what next? If the author has courage enough, the next step is to put the whole manuscript away for a while. The author who does have wisdom enough to do this discovers amazing things about his book when he comes back to it. Chances are that when he finished the first draft, even when he had revised it two or three times, the work had about it a rosy sort of haze. It was perfect. It said just what he thought it would. And for him, right then, it did. It said not only everything he had put down on paper but everything he had in his head. But six months later, with the vision somewhat dimmed in his mind, he finds that the words he has written on paper do not recapture the whole idea for him. Instead, he sees flaws that it had never occurred to him were there. He may even feel that the book is not valid at all. On the other hand, if he does recognize the book as good, he will have greater confidence in it than he could have had before.

Most authors cannot wait, however. They must do something with their books at once. So they try other methods of getting a clear look at a book. One is to have someone else read it. Not just anyone, however. An editor often serves in this capacity for a published writer. But a friend can also be helpful. When looking for a second pair of eyes, the author needs to look for someone who will read the material objectively and be willing to give an honest opinion. Praise is nice to hear, but it is not helpful if it is not deserved. At the same time the author needs to find a reader who will not read the book mentally rewriting it as he would have written it

himself. This is no help either. The reader must be one who will take the book on the terms it is given and determine whether or not the author has succeeded in doing what he set out to do. The wise author finds one or two good readers and is content. Too many readers mean too many conflicting judgments, for no two people will agree on all things; and a book must never be revised by a committee if it is going to continue to express the individuality of the author. In the end the author himself must accept or reject advice he is given, depending on the validity of the comments as he sees them.

An author may also find reading aloud helpful. He may have someone else read the book to him. He may read it himself to someone else. Or he may read it to himself alone. Infelicities of expression, awkwardness of phrasing, and poor sentence and paragraph rhythm reveal themselves here.

At last there will come a time when there is nothing more to be done. The work is finished, revised, ready. It is typed—with two or three carbons—and there it is. Next the publisher? An author with a publisher, with a contract even, knows where his work is to go. An author with no publisher, only hoping for publication, must decide where to send his work.

It takes a long time for a book to make its way through the intricacies of publishing house procedures. Any manuscript sent out is unlikely to return for several weeks and maybe even for several months. There is no point in wasting a manuscript's time by sending it to the wrong place—a publisher that would never consider such a book. Before an author sends his manuscript out, he needs to know if the publisher he has chosen publishes his sort of book. If the publisher doesn't, another should be chosen.

Some authors write a letter of inquiry first. This is helpful if the author takes "no" for an answer. It is a waste of everyone's time if the author hears "no" and sends the manuscript anyway.

How many times should an author have his manuscript rejected before giving up? If an author believes in a book, the rejection of one or two or even five or six publishers should not discourage him. Publishers do not have unlimited resources. They cannot publish everything that comes to them. The editors at any one house can cope with only so many books, only so many manuscripts for reworking and revision and production. And editors choose on the basis of their own likes and dislikes. So one editor may not have time, another may not like the author's kind of book, and still another may already have too many in that category. But most good books will finally find a home. Good books do not go unpublished. Only when an author has had ten or twelve rejections should he begin to question what he has done and perhaps seek further advice.

No author when he begins a book knows where that book will take him. He may not know how the book will develop, what it will be like as a finished book. Certainly he cannot be sure just what kind of reception it will have from readers, even if he has a publisher who likes his idea. But if the ingredients he stirs in are good, then he may hope that the finished product will satisfy him and will also arouse the interest of a publisher and of many readers.

No author of a published book knows on the day of publication how many readers he will reach. Maybe no author ever knows how many people encounter something of what he is, of what he thinks and feels, in any one given book. And no author knows as he writes one book what other books he will someday write or what he may one day become. No author should ever be inhibited by this knowledge. But at the same time, no author should forget it. He should give every book the best he has. And in days after, he should remember that though an early work be imperfect, though it express ideas that have changed, though it may be immature or even unwise, he need not be ashamed of it if it was honestly done and done with all the skill and craft he had been able to acquire. There is

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room for shame or embarrassment only when a book is too hastily done, too sloppily prepared, too poorly checked, too cheaply held, to be truly honest.

Words on paper can last a long time. A book once begun may end for the author when he completes it but go on for years and years for readers. It is a wise author then who considers carefully what he begins.

Is It a Good Book?

“Will my book be published?” This is the author’s question. But whether the answer be yes or no, the more important question is, “Is it a good book?”

A good book for whom?

For children, of course.

Then what do children say?

They say they like exciting books. They like books that prove children can do big things. They like funny books. They like books they can cry over. They like books that take them out of themselves and into the world, so they can survey great problems but can still eliminate them simply by closing the book. They like books that

show their own lives, that prove that in spite of the inadequacies they feel they are not so different from a lot of other people. They like books that suit them as individuals, just as adults do.

What books do children like? They like good books. And what is a good book? No one can know for sure. Though there are many who would find them convenient, there are no firm standards for literature, no hard-and-fast rules. Good is too elusive for that. Books are too personal, to authors and readers both, to lend themselves to one pattern of judgment.

Yet, resting in the background are qualities a work either possesses or does not possess that indicate something of its potential. Among these, the honesty, the validity, the sensitiveness, the readability, the naturalness, the rhythm and pace, the unity, and the sense of life a book has are consciously or unconsciously observed by most readers. And these either create an atmosphere in which a book can be enjoyed—whether it is fiction, nonfiction, or poetry—or they do not.

A book should be honest about what it is and consistent. Living beyond one's income to impress the neighbors may work in society, but not in a book. A book cannot blow up its material and pretend to give more than it really does. A good book does not promise more than it pays, it does not parade under false colors. Books that are not honest are soon found out by their audience. Pretentious styles, overdramatized plots, underresearched information do not impress readers for long. Facts must be facts, and the things the reader is led to believe must be justifiable at least in terms of the book. If they are not, discrepancies in detail, in mood, in tension, in a lack of underlying vigor and strength will give it away.

A good book is valid. It's more than honest. It has a feeling about it of not only being true as the author sees truth, but being true as life itself sees truth. An author can be honest with himself and still write a book full of a great many misconceptions. Horatio Alger probably believed in his rags-to-riches epics. And his scenes of poverty

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and of wealth may be accurate; boys may even have risen to success as his heroes did; but such fortuitous patterns of events don't happen often. Luck and energy work together for great good for some people, but not for all people. They can't be counted on as utterly as Mr. Alger would like us to believe. Validity is more than one real event. Validity rises out of the universals of human experience. True people, true events have in them a depth and variety that allow for as many interpretations as life itself, and they are conveyed in a book in a way that allows each different reader to find his own truth in them. It is a valid book that is worth a child's time.

A more obvious, more easily segregated characteristic of a good book is its sensibleness. Even nonsense, if it is good, is sensible. The sensible book appears at the right time, in a form that enhances it, and it establishes boundaries for itself that are reasonable and understandable. One can't imagine Edward Lear making fun of a truly handicapped person or creature, but he made *The Pobble Who Had No Toes* a bit of delicious nonsense. A sensible book of any kind, fact or fiction, approaches its subject reasonably. It respects its audience. It credits readers with intelligence enough to understand what is clear and definite and explains what is not likely to be clear. Most of all, a sensible book is a book that has a reason for being. It exists because it must exist. It does not duplicate endless other books; it offers a unique amusement or enlightenment or view of reality. It is, in short, a book someone will likely want to read because it is founded on a well-chosen idea that is carefully developed to display its properties in the best possible manner. All of which may sound so sensible that it seems unnecessary to say it. But every editor knows that there are enormous numbers of people who write manuscripts who have never encountered this kind of sense.

An important thing almost every reader notices in every book he encounters is its readability and interest. Whether a book is interesting depends somewhat on the reader, of course. If a reader is fasci-

nated by books on astronomy and on deep space, then he will find most books in this area interesting. Readers who do not enjoy these subjects will find most such books barely readable. The interested reader will read even the most intricate and difficult material with some enjoyment. And the uninterested reader will find dull the most flowing and pleasurable language in the world. Nevertheless, a good book is readable—certainly by the one who is interested and also by someone who is only mildly interested, providing his reading skill is adequate to the material.

Readability in a book begins with the author's method of presentation and his approach to his subject and his audience. Presentation must vary with intended audiences. A college professor may be enthusiastic about a subject, may know the field well, may organize his ideas well, and may have long wanted to write something in this area that would really be of interest to junior-high-school-age people. But if he writes his book in the form and jargon of the pedantic lecture or paper, he is not likely to reach the audience he wants. He needs to write instead a simple, direct piece of nonfiction. Many academicians can do this, but some cannot. The difference lies in personality, in writing skill, in an inborn sense of drama, of pacing, and of control of language, and also perhaps in sympathy for and feeling with the audience the author is trying to reach. A lecturer writes lectures. But a person who is primarily interested in people as people writes books.

What is true of the college professor is true of all other kinds of writers. Each needs a style that reaches out and attracts people. Whatever it is that makes a book readable, it is more than complexity of sentences, density of paragraphs, and simplicity of vocabulary. Interest and readability stem rather from the variety of those sentences, the content of those paragraphs, and the rightness of the vocabulary. A long, long pattern of sentences all the same length and all with the same flat, measured stance will be dull and unreadable, even if the author has used simple words. The densest of para-

graphs can be readable if the order of thought is logical and well paced. A difficult word wisely used can make for more readable material than elaborate circumlocutions designed to avoid the use of that difficult word.

Yet there is something beyond even a well-stated, well-paced effort that determines readability. This is something born of the author's enthusiasm. Enthusiasm alone is not enough to make a book; but writing ability and accurate information without enthusiasm can make wasted work. There is a felicity of approach, a joyousness of manner that comes in a book enthusiastically written that nothing else can quite duplicate. Enthusiasm lightens even the heaviest work, and it adds charm to the most difficult concepts. It is necessary in both fact and fiction. No book can maintain a high level of excitement all the way through. No reader would want this. But a reader needs to be carried forward from surge to surge on a general warmth of spirit. A book needs to be conceived in joy and dedicated to an overall tone of welcome to the reader. The reader sometimes knowingly, but just as often unknowingly, senses whether this is present or not. Without it the book may fail to move him; with it even the most obscure bit can seem inspired.

Enthusiasm can also help an author achieve another essential of good writing, naturalness. Naturalness in a book is basically a feeling of rightness, and often of simplicity and directness. Above all, it is an impression that the book fits together easily, that it is not labored. Writing is hard, but it should not appear to be so. A book should seem to have been at home with its author; both should appear to have been comfortable with each other.

Some people make writing harder than it needs to be by setting up artificial rules for themselves or by listening too hard and paying too much attention to the rules laid down by others. The books that result are self-conscious and mannered. They are not natural. Rules for writing are fine as long as they do not interfere with the writing. Efforts to achieve an effect are fine as long as the effect comes

off without the effort showing and as long as the writing says something. But unnatural convolutions of words, strange combinations of clauses, or striking attitudes of phrase have no place in good writing, at least not good writing for children. The best writing (to paraphrase Jefferson) is that writing which shows not at all. Writing is a vehicle for thought. It is the thoughts that are important. And if the manner in which an idea is written is in itself so striking that the idea is lost in the glitter of the phrasing, the writing is poor and unnatural.

When an author writes a book, he does well to remember that the reader will be less aware of him than he thinks. The sly attack on an idea, the clever transition, the unobtrusive detail added for an obscure flavor will pass most readers unnoticed—especially child readers. And if in the attempt to work these gimmicks in so that other writers may admire them, naturalness and style are lost, nothing has been gained.

Style is an important part of any book. It has something to do with naturalness, something to do with readability, and something to do with personality; it is as much a part of excellence as anything else. A good style shows that the author has an ear for how things sound on paper, a sense of drama that helps him vary his sentences and underline what is important by using his own natural rhythm to the best possible advantage, and a discrimination with words that allows each word to carry feeling as well as meaning. These are not taught virtues. Because each person has a different natural rhythm and style, the stylistic tricks that will help any one author achieve the effects he desires may well be different from those that are most useful to another author. In general it can be said that, except in poetry and sometimes in conversation, the book that relies on dashes, exclamation points, boldface and italic type, and other such artificial means to achieve emphasis has been written by an author who has not yet come to grips with the question of how his style can best be

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made to work for him. Good writing reinforces meaning without artificial assistance.

But emphasis is only one area in which style must be put to work. In fiction, style creates mood, carries the reader from one episode to another, and prepares a reader for what is going to happen. Like background music in a movie, it reinforces character, paints a setting, determines the pace of action. It also determines the level of diction, the literary distance the author creates between himself and his reader. A good book gives the reader a firm sense of exactly the relationship between himself and the story. In some cases the reader is brought up close and lives the story from deep within it; there is a strong sense of immediacy in all the language used. In other books the reader is seeing the movement of the book from a greater distance, though he may be just as much involved. Which distance is right depends on the story, the author's natural style, and the effect the author is trying to create. Whatever distance, whatever overall mood, whatever style an author effects in a book, should be maintained throughout, down to the last verb and relative pronoun unless something in the book itself demands a radical change.

In nonfiction, style should help the reader know what is important, reinforce the pattern of the organization of the material, and give insight into the author's viewpoint on each phase of the material. Rhythm and style, completely intertwined, are the basics of good writing; they show themselves to best advantage when they have been explored and shaped by the author and then are allowed to be themselves.

The best authors know their style and know how to use it. They know when to polish it further and when to leave their writing alone. Underpolishing or a poor understanding of how the elements of style work can make for writing that is loose and sloppy. The book that results may have fine dramatic effects, but the whole will lack clarity and firm definition. And there will be too many ragged

places in the rhythms. An overpolished style is often flat; the natural hills and valleys of accent have all been made artificial and unreal, overdone or underdone. The rhythm may become self-conscious and the effects bland or brittle because the author worked too hard to make everything perfect. A good style and a good rhythm are never quite perfect. And it is in part their small imperfections that make them interesting.

Style and rhythm bind together the whole of the book. But behind them lie the author's idea and his subject. Style and rhythm are merely the external symbols of what should be a deep internal unity. They are the flowering, the visual blossoming, of the author's initial vision. If the idea and the author's subsequent development of it are good, the book will be good. If not, even a great style will not make the book a good one.

The unity of a book lies essentially in an author's vision of what his book is. Beyond that, it lies in the means he takes to structure and express his ideas. Structure can assume a number of forms, depending on what the author most wants to emphasize. If his book is fiction, its structure may depend in part, for example, on use of the first person, in order to emphasize Jane herself as she tells what happened to her last week when she got even with that awful Jamie Buckner who lives next door. Or the story may need to be told in the third person so that as the events happen before the reader's eyes, he will not know until the end whether Jane survived her solemn retribution. Or the whole thing may have to be told by Jamie, because it is essentially his story. Whichever or whatever organizing principle and mode of expression is taken, the book should cling to it and not surprise the reader by changing approaches every two pages, or worse yet, by changing the whole nature of the story in midstream. Jane ought not to lay her plans in the third person, making the reader anxious to know how things work out, if the results of the plan are not the climax of the book. Unity will be lost if the whole result of Jane's effort is told in a backflash, as the story

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goes on to tell in the first person how Jamie's cousin Bob helped him catch a big bass on a new fly rod. And what is more, the book will not be fair. A book can't in good conscience work a reader up to wanting to know one thing and give him something else instead. A unified book has a focal point, a real sense of direction. A writer needs to decide what he is writing about and write about that. The reader has a right to complain if the story doesn't give what it promised, if it does not fulfill the patterns, forms, and structures it entered upon in the beginning.

The same is true of nonfiction. If a book says it is about the ancient art of rock-polishing, it should not turn out to have a text that deals largely with gardening because rocks are sometimes used in gardens. Or the book should not be about jewelry making because polished stones are used in jewelry. This is leading the reader astray. The structure of the book must be such that the content is apparent from the beginning.

A book with good unity can have limitless depth. Only the circumference need be limited. This perimeter should be defined very early in the book. The reader needs to know where he is and where he is going. Children especially need this because so much is uncharted for them that they need more guideposts along the way than adults sometimes find necessary.

Yet for all that an observer is aware of unity, of rhythm, of style, of naturalness, of readability and interest, of sensibleness, truth and honesty, all of which are a part of a good book, the thing he is most influenced by is the life he finds in the work. This is true whether the book is fact or fiction. A writer must put himself and his interests into a book to make it live. But the reader does not know the author; he knows only what he reads, and to him life comes in terms of the ability of the story or of the material, whatever it is, to re-create itself as a four-dimensional experience in his own mind. This is accomplished if the book leaves enough space in its makeup for the reader to come in.

For example, a reader is suddenly deluged with not one but three books on the making of carts in northern Asia Minor in the early part of the third millennium B.C. It is a subject that the reader has never felt strongly about. He can't even be sure he wants to know anything about it at all. He prefers cars. The first book tells in abstract terms about the places carts and parts of carts have been found, the exact dimensions of each archaeological dig, the depth of each hole, the size of each cart, what was interred with each, and the means of construction, when this can be determined. All the facts are there, and the reader feels like a computer. An archaeologist or an anthropologist would be fascinated, but children are not professional archaeologists or anthropologists. The second book gives the information in what it calls fiction. Two children of that remote period are disinterred by the author and brought back to life, as is the whole village. It is a normal day. We are shown the houses in which the people live, the location of the local well, the pots the mother uses for cooking, the tools that are available to various artisans, the crops being raised, and as a final fillip, the children venture down to that marvelous man, the cart maker. They *oh* and *ah* in proper Bronze Age terms over the intricacies of cart making and the marvels of the wheeled vehicles. Then they venture home to make a clay model of same, which the author may or may not choose to show as a photograph of such a clay model that has actually been unearthed. The information may be completely accurate, and there in the proper quantity, but the child characters, forced to move through a rigid exhibition schedule, cannot emerge as more than sticks. There is no life to give the material depth and to bring the material to life for the reader. The last book may be an account of an actual dig in the area where the carts have been uncovered. The author takes us to the site as the archaeologists begin their search for human remains. He tells us why they dig where they do. He lets us see the surprise of the diggers as they unearth what looks to be evidence of wood, long decayed but still apparent in the tex-

ture of the earth. He describes the carefulness of the work, the checks on measurement as the dig goes on, and the excitement of the group as some real wood wheels are unearthed—wood that is perhaps five thousand years old. He lets us look in as archaeologists compare their finds with other similar finds and make preliminary conclusions about the people who made the wheel. This book has all the facts and measurements of the first book, and it also has a place for some generalizations that the first probably did not have. More important, there are real people in this book and there is real suspense, even though the book is nonfiction. There is room here for the reader. He does not have to be a computer. He does not have to press his face against a glass and watch the stiff figures of a diorama display information to him. Instead he can participate. This book has life.

These three ways of handling this subject or any subject are not the only ways of course. Nor are the first two ways always dull and lifeless. With the proper details, the first could have had life; with a plot and an honest aura of emotions, the children of the second could have lived. What makes the difference is the use to which people and events are put. A book may not use people as merely a means to an end, and it should not present facts of any kind, except mathematics and pure science, totally divorced from the life they represent or the implications they may have for a reader's visualization of life. To have life a book must treat life as something important, not just something that is a useful tool or a prod to stir up information.

A book that is alive clings to the reader and gives him a sense of belonging to it, or at best a sense of witnessing events that are really taking place. It makes its people live, sometimes effectively enough that the reader can see them in situations that are not in the book at all. The book that lives makes itself seem important because it relates to life itself.

Each generation of children puts its stamp on the books written

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for it, and enters into these books most easily. These are the books that seem most alive to them. They seem lively if only because they represent the now, an awareness of current attitudes and feelings. All of this is a part of the author's awareness of life and his response to it. But newness can be a trap for the unwary. For, almost before a trend has been established, the clichés of the style have emerged: the stock language, the stock forms, the stock approaches; and in fiction, the stock plots, characters, and even backgrounds.

Almost every good book is a victory in an author's battle for freshness as well as for life. Patterns seem to be the lot of all but the most valiant. Ruts are standard paths to mediocre achievement. Breaking patterns, abandoning ruts, and eschewing the current and too common are easy criteria to write on paper, but hard to know and to follow. Through the eyes of the truly creative, even the old can be alive and new; and under the pen of the popularizer and opportunist with little creative skill, the very new can seem tired and old. The truly new and fresh belongs to itself alone, but also belongs to many generations; for each finds in it that which is new, an author with individuality.

All of this, from honesty and simplicity through naturalness and freshness, are criteria for all books; criteria that lie beyond mere grammar and other basic necessities. Yet even they are not enough when one is really determining whether a book is a good book or not. For beyond these general measurements are more specific ones for different kinds of books.

In fiction, plotting, characters, and background must be considered; the suitability of the literary distance for the subject matters; the complexity of the work in the light of the depth is important; and the craft and skill and structure with which the author has bound all these elements together cannot be ignored.

First of all it must be said that a good book of fiction is not about something. It is, instead, an experience. The reader is not told what

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happens. He sees it for himself. The sights through which he sees vary, but he sees nevertheless.

The church was empty, every corner of it. Johann looked, and looked again. Was that a man? No, just a shadow in the corner. Those footsteps! The sexton going up to ring the bell? No, just a mouse scurrying through the vestry. He walked slowly toward the organ. All he wanted was a look, just one look at the mighty instrument. If only no one came. If no one came even for a minute, he'd make it.

Here there is a strong sense of urgency, and a sense of being there, of looking through the mind of a boy engaged in what he considers to be a daring deed and a necessary one. Contrast this with another way of writing it.

The boy entered the church and looked around. Anyone there to see him would have beheld a flushed face and an eager watchful boyish look. But there was no one there. The boy paused at the door, tense, expectant, almost afraid, then his face relaxed. He walked down the aisle slowly, approaching the organ. It was his chance to see the mighty instrument at last.

The second is almost completely outside the incident. The suspense is less and the reader is an onlooker, not a participant. These are two different approaches to the same scene. Yet both are in the third person and both relate substantially the same thing. The difference is in the immediacy of the first as opposed to the second. Yet both let the reader enter the experience, one from the outside and one from the inside.

There are many shades of this, of course, and which is right depends on the author's approach and style, on the story the author has to tell, and on the author's skill in telling it. But however they do it, all good authors of children's fiction create an experience, they do not write about something. Their plots are carefully handled se-

quences of action that move a reader from an initial, basic situation through logical complexities to a new and changed situation.

Basic to creating a sense of experience are the pace and dimension of the book. Pace is the speed with which the elements of the plot are revealed. Dimension is the scope of the plot and the details that give it shape. If events move too quickly or if there is not enough living action surrounding the forward progress of a plot, a book becomes thin and skeletonlike. If a plot moves too slowly and there are too many extraneous bits of conversation and pieces of action between the major events of the plot, the reader may grow bored and put the book down. A good writer has as good a sense of pace and dimension as an actor or dramatist. He gives his work enough color to make it real and a swift enough pace to keep the reader moving. A good book is a subtle combination of action and resources from which action springs.

But a book is not all plot. It is character and background, too. Actually all three are a part of the same package; and if the book is good the three will be inextricably bound together. The plot may vary from a very loose construction to a very tight, swiftly paced adventure. But whichever it is, there will be complications, and the root of the complications will be in the character or characters who must unravel them.

There are a number of ways in which a reader can recognize a well-bound-up-plot-and-character book. In the first place the characters seem to be really living the events. And the conversation works. After a few pages the reader knows the characters well, knows what they might say next and how they might say it. The plot begins with a need, a lack, a desire, a restlessness, an unease felt by the hero or heroine or by the protagonist, whoever he might be. The book is the working out of that problem. Generally it is not a trivial problem. It is not a girl who feels a strange need for a flowered handkerchief to wear on her head, for example, unless there is a valid reason why she needs the handkerchief or unless her real prob-

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lem lies deeper, perhaps an unawareness of what true needing is. Whatever, the problem is a deep one and a universal one, often so subtle it cannot be expressed, only acted out.

The characters in a good book seem to live not only in the book but beyond the pages as well. The book tells what happens to them over a given span of time. But the reader knows they were not all born on the first page and do not all die on the last page. They have vigor and a sense of direction that impel them through the book and beyond. Such characters are people with flaws, with human emotions that are not always pleasant, with desires, wisdoms, stupidities, sensitivities, insensitivities, with all the virtues and vices that make up real persons. They live as people, they react as people, they are people. They are strong enough not to be forced into actions unnatural to them, and they are never merely place-holders moving through prepatterned events.

Books, for all their subtlety and all their reality, should not be too complex, however. There is no point in making a children's book any more complex than necessary. The plot of a book must be logical; it must have reason as well as reasonable characters behind it. It should move from one event to the next smoothly and justifiably, unless there is some reason for it to do otherwise. The author must use his imagination in developing his plot and letting his characters live their lives, but he must not let his imagination work overtime. He must not put more into the story than belongs there, any more than he should put less than is enough to tell the story and make it work. Good plots are believable, good characters are believable, and good backgrounds are believable.

Background is a third element of fiction. It is as much a part of the unity of the book as are plot and character. Background may be a place the author knows well, it may be a place he has never seen, but whichever, the mood of the place and the details of the character's movements there are real and convincing. A book can have too much background or too little. The best backgrounds are created by

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authors who become steeped in the setting they need and then forget it and write, putting in what comes and is necessary. When a reader feels overcome with information, the story is overcome with background. On the other hand, if the reader is never quite sure where he is and what the place has to do with the story, if the story could just as well have happened in a hundred other places, the background is too thin. Background gives the mood and the atmosphere to a work; when well done, it is the solid ground, the foundation, on which the plot and characters of the book rest.

Finally, when all the elements are assembled and placed in position, there comes an ending. The ending of a children's book of fiction should be sharp and clear. There was a time when it also had to be final and happy. Those days have passed. It is possible now to have an open-ended finish and to have a less than happy climax when it is called for, although pure, stark tragedy has seldom yet been seen. A good book will, however, cut off smoothly, leaving the reader satisfied.

In the overall picture that affects the judging of children's fiction much has changed in the last few years. Just as endings may now be less than happy when truth demands it, so style may be more varied and approach more individual. For example, there was a time when a book in the first person was frowned upon. *They* said, "Children do not like *I* books." But authors with courage tried them and found that *they* were wrong. Emily Neville's *It's Like This, Cat* is only one example. Others said that books had to be limited to one viewpoint character. And when one has read enough manuscripts with a shifting viewpoint—a shifting viewpoint in each sentence of each paragraph—one can understand why someone thought a rule against more than one viewpoint character was a good idea. In many books it still is. But in others it is absurd. Imagine a book in which the plot revolves around two invisible walls of solid thought—the thought of a galaxy M-31 superman—that are moving toward the center of the United States, one from the West

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Coast and one from the East. As they move, they force ahead of them, like a vise, all thinking creatures. In the West is a boy; in the East is his best friend. They are the heroes and eventually when they come together they will work out the one thought that will destroy Superthought. The actions of both boys must be traced in order to establish proper suspense and in order to explore all of the elements that will create the solution. You cannot tell such a story gracefully with one viewpoint.

Language has also changed. The reader no longer need condemn a book if it does not always speak in complete sentences or in completely grammatical phrases, even in narrative. The style most prevalent today is brief, crisp, and casual. The heavily embroidered prose that dominated children's books through the 1930's, and in some cases beyond, is largely gone. But this does not mean that this style or any other deserves condemnation when it appears in places where it belongs. The test of language today is: does it fit the story? The one kind of language that does not impair initial acceptance of a book but may impair its longevity is fad words. They are here for six months and then replaced. A book that uses too many of them may be outdated before it is published.

The most obvious things to a reader, then, in judging fiction, are the convincingness of the plot and characters, the suitability of the background, and the language and style in which the book is written. All must work together if the book is to function as a unit. But these are just the first hurdles. If the reader and the author get over these, then there is the question of depth and memorability. The finest books have both. Last of all, the reader must judge the truth of the author's vision. This is the most difficult of all judgments to make and sometimes time alone can do it. Readers are often too close to the writings of their own generation to know truth when they see it. But if it is captured in a good enough book, it will eventually be recognized and time will merely have proved its rightness.

Judgment of nonfiction begins with a look at the same basic qualities as fiction; but, like fiction, it has its own special criteria, too. It need not worry about plots and characters and moods. But it must dwell on scope, organization, clarity, accuracy, and interest. Without a careful regard for these, it may well fall short.

Scope in a book of nonfiction is the author's choice of content. The author may survey a large area—living organisms, perhaps. But he knows he is most interested in vertebrates. So he decides to write about vertebrates. But a book on all vertebrates would be too long for the nine-year-old audience he has chosen. So he decides to discuss one vertebrate and trace its evolution, skeletal structure, and life and environment patterns as a model for others. He chooses the dog. And he writes a book that discusses the dog as an animal, not as a pet, and not in its many breeds, but as a creature of nature. The reader coming to such a book may prefer cats or horses. But the reader cannot let his emotions color his value judgment of the book. He may choose not to take it home to read because it is not in his range of interest. But if he does read it and judge it, he can judge the author's choice of scope only on the following points: (1) Is it as complete as it should be for its audience? (2) Did the author choose too large a subject, one he could not cover adequately? (3) Did the author choose too small a subject, one that seems insignificant even after the author has done all he can to make it seem important? (4) Did the author choose a subject he could write about in a language understandable to his chosen audience? (5) Did the author cover as much as was necessary and suitable for his audience, and then somehow help them to know what they had learned and what they had not learned, so they would not consider their learning complete on the subject, if indeed it was not?

The next area in which a reader may judge the value of nonfiction is organization. No matter how much good information an author has, and no matter how wisely he determines the limits of his work, if he does not organize his material well within his limits, he

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has failed to produce the best possible book. There is no one way of organizing a book on any subject. But a book on space vehicles that begins with a detailed analysis of the functioning of a minor part of an engine still on the drawing board may be poorly organized, especially if it is supposed to be a simple book for beginners. It might better begin with a brief history of proposed space vehicles, then move on to the earliest working forms, and gradually progress to more complex ideas, building on each bit of knowledge given, until it comes to the yet unbuilt engine. This is one way. There are others. But plunging into the center of a very complex and detailed description of something the reader knows nothing about is seldom a suitable plan. Good organization generally asks that a writer begin at what seems to be the beginning—the simplest and easiest thing—and then move on to the more difficult, the ideas that require the earlier ideas for understanding. This applies to sentences and paragraphs and chapters as well as entire books.

Clear writing goes hand in hand with organization to make a book readable. Clear writing begins with clear thinking. It means getting at the heart of the matter as directly as possible without leaving out any details that are necessary for complete understanding. Normally, for children at least, clear writing uses a minimum of technical jargon, avoids dense complex sentences and paragraphs and a great density of complex ideas. Good writing need not be as light as hydrogen, but it need not be as heavy as lead either. Comprehension of clearly written books of nonfiction for children should not demand six readings of each sentence. The reader may find more on a second and third reading than he found on the first, but the first should also give him something. A good writer has read every sentence he has written over to himself at some point (not on the initial writing) and asked, "Does that sentence say something?" and "Does that sentence say too much?" The wise writer has gone even further. He has asked, "Does each sentence connect with the sentence before and the sentence after without gap or repetition?"

Does each sentence carry the meaning a small way forward? Is each sentence as concise as it should be?" When the writer has asked himself these questions, the reader reading the book does not need to ask them. The even, direct flow of information makes the asking unnecessary.

With all of this to think about, it seems almost an imposition to ask a writer to be interesting as well. Yet most readers do ask this. An interesting book of nonfiction has a well-chosen scope, good organization, clear writing, and a style and manner of presentation that does not bore the reader. The book is concrete. It does not expect a reader to follow chapter after chapter with never an example or something that will give ideas dimension. No matter how abstract ideas become, it relates them in some way to the world the reader knows or to ideas the reader has already absorbed and accepted. And it is lively. Unless it is about death or some obviously somber subject, the material does not sound ponderous and over-serious. There are few things in life and the world that children take really seriously for long, outside themselves. Chances are, then, that the reader will not take a book as seriously as its author, so a wise author makes his book as light as he can without losing the dignity of his material. Liveliness becomes an integral part of the nature of the work, a part of the author's whole approach. And that liveliness, an expression of the author's own interest, makes the book interesting to others.

It seems almost unnecessary to say that above all a book of nonfiction should be accurate. Yet there are those who feel that slight inaccuracies won't hurt anything. That the reader won't know, and what he doesn't know won't hurt him. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Children know amazing things these days. And if a minor point is inaccurate and the reader knows only that one thing, he may immediately distrust the entire book. And with good reason, even if that one mistake is the only flaw in the entire work. If, for example, the reader knows that the white pine has wide-spreading roots that stay near the surface of the earth, and a book about sew-

ers says that the deep tap root of the white pine will search out and clog even the deepest sewer, the reader has a right to suspect everything that book says. Further, it is the author's job to be accurate whether the reader is likely to discover errors or not, and it is the editor's or evaluator's job to question all that the author does.

If the nonfiction writer has succeeded in doing all that a good nonfiction writer should do, his book may find readers who get as excited about his subject as he does, even when they never thought they would be interested at all.

Another nonfiction area, but one that is like fiction in that both are expressions of experience and both exist to create or re-create an experience in a reader, is poetry. Poetry is essentially compounded of words, rhythm, and structure. Within these there may fall images, rhymes, figures of speech (the ones everyone learns in school), expressions of emotion, impressionistic representations of moods that cannot be explained, and ideas, even some very concrete ideas. Most poetry is a condensed expression of whatever it is intended to be. It is the ultimate reduction of what it is. And it is on this basis that poetry for children must be examined.

First of all, does it hold a valid experience for the child? Is it something he can understand, but something that will also give him something new? Will it help him see a familiar thing in a new and valid way, or will it take him from where he is into a place he never suspected could exist, but that has real relevance to his existence? It is here that much sentimental poetry fails. It merely restates what a child knows in a way he already knows it, or in a way that has no real meaning for him—that is designed for nostalgic adults rather than non-nostalgic children. The experience a poem offers a child can be anything—it can be a way of seeing something, a way of thinking about something, an emotion, a mood, a frame of mind. What it is does not matter so much as that it is and that a child reader can enter into it and find it exciting.

The experience a poem gives, be it intellectual, emotional, or sensory, is couched in words. The words must be well chosen and ar-

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ranged in a pattern that adds to the effect of the whole. This may range from a definite meter and set patterns of metrical lines, to a rhythmic but formless arrangement dictated by the essence of the material. There may be rhyme as a part of the pattern. But if there is rhyme and there is a set meter—and the two generally go together—the two should not dominate the experience but heighten it, while they themselves remain unobtrusive. It is probably more difficult to write good rhymed and metrical poetry than unrhymed or unmetrical poetry. But it is easier to write bad rhymed verse than unrhymed poetry.

*Oh here you see a happy child
Whose mind untainted, undefiled
Would never to his mother mild
Deliver insults fierce and wild.*

This sort of thing flows out like water through a leak in a dike. Almost always the dike needs to be plugged. It is true that it is generally the idea as well as the verse that is bad. But it is the ease with which the verse bounces along that deceives poor poets and unenlightened readers into thinking it has value. The same reader—and the same poet—might miss entirely the image in this unstructured thought, an image that might have validity for some readers.

*Why do the walls compress me in,
Lying here;
When walls without
On days when I am well
Fence off
And leave so little room to play.*

Yet either kind of poetry can be good or bad. The essential thing is that the words and the pattern serve the experience and are not a substitute for it.

Good poetry has depth. Depth in poetry reaches into the elemental emotions and the universal experiences of people and lifts them

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up to make them visible, real, and important. Even to children the most important experiences can seem unreal and transitory. They are hard to pin down as a part of life. And only when they are past do they take on their true stature. Poetry helps the important attain its true importance, and wraps into one tight capsule a whole, for keeping and remembering. And it does all of this with an economy of words, a sharpness of perception that pinpoints its meaning, and an abundance of overtones that reverberate almost to infinity.

All subjects are suitable for poetry. But the poetry most likely to appeal to children is the poetry that tells a story and the poetry that expresses emotions they themselves have felt. It is a rare poet who can honestly and genuinely create true poetry for children. Such poets are to be cherished.

Employing all these basic forms—fiction, nonfiction, and poetry—but adding something that is wholly its own is the picture book. In a good picture book there is a dimension of unity between text and illustrations that makes a unique blend of the word with the purely visual. Pictures in a picture book do more than illustrate text, they enlarge the text. They are the medium that gives dimension and scope to the text. The text itself, in the best books, is simple but it allows much to be pictured from it, both in illustrations and in the imagination of the reader.

A true picture book story, no matter how simple, is often of really heroic scope. It can be said to be a small novel or a small book of nonfiction. It may not have subplots and all the devices of a novel, but it has change of scene, several important elements that contribute to the tapestry of its composition, and it offers an opportunity for picture variety, both in character and setting. It also offers scope for illustration. The text may be simple and direct, but its implications are wide and varied enough that the work of the illustrator can interpret and extend the text without doing violence to the book.

A picture book text is like poetry in that a great deal of meaning is condensed into a very small space. Yet the depth of the material is never so apparent that the story is lost. And the story is one that will delight the very young. There must not be so much text that the attention of the child will be lost. At the same time, there must not be so little text that the thread of the narrative is not clear, unless pictures and text can be so completely interrelated that the pictures do what the text does not. How long a text should be cannot be determined before a story is written. Once it is done, a careful judge can see if there is too much wordage or too little to tell the story or convey the idea. The right words and the right number of words are not easily achieved. A picture book of a mere two hundred words cannot be written by just anyone. It takes talent.

Most publishers probably receive more picture book texts than any other kind. And most of them are bad. They are bad because they have no depth, because they are dull, because they are like hundreds of others that have been received. The number of stories about pine trees that want to be Christmas trees, donkeys that carry Mary to Bethlehem, and items that become the Christmas star are almost legion. The stories about Santa Claus are almost equally repetitious. So are the varieties of animals who long to be something else. Other picture book stories are too abstract, too general, or have too little plot to be worthwhile.

There are many picture book stories submitted to publishers that are good stories, but that are magazine stories and not books, or perhaps stories that need more stories to make a book of stories. Magazine stories are stories in which one single incident is related. The story pivots around one central episode that gives in one reading all it has to give. It does not offer a variety of picture possibilities. Its scene is limited to one or two locations. Its characters are largely undeveloped. It is not a small novel.

An interesting development in picture books recently has been a vogue for picture books with no words at all. And some of them

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have been quite good. Children, used to pictures everywhere, respond to them. And children who cannot read may find a picture book that they can "read" themselves an unexpected delight. Their imaginations may well be stretched as they interpret what they see for themselves. But such picture books will never wholly take the place of picture books with words, if children have anything to say about it. The warm companionship that develops between the reader and the read-to is something to be given up only with reluctance.

As to pictures themselves, in a picture book they must blend with the text, must be done in a style appropriate to the story, must go beyond the story to add whatever the artist sees as being truly a part of that story. Color, style of art, size of book, design of pages, must all be one with the story. Yet the pictures must have the power in themselves to attract readers, to capture a child's attention, and to make imagination work. Good pictures for a picture book are memorable, exciting, fresh, and startling each time they are seen. They, with the words, make the book worth studying again and again.

What makes a book a good book? The things considered here are only a few of the things that can make a book succeed. No one can name all of them because each good book makes its own rules. Just as every individual is different from every other individual, so every good book differs from every other.

Yet someone must judge. Some outside force must determine what is good and what is not, what is acceptable and what is not.

Time is a judge. The books of the past have been thoroughly winnowed for us. Some we have still because they have value for us yet, their universality speaks from one generation to the next. Some we have still because they are curiosities, because they show us a time past as it was to people then, although now we see that time through another color glass entirely, and we see that what people thought was eternal truth was merely fad. And some books of the

past have disappeared. Time has judged them to be of no value for us, although they may have served their own time well.

But time cannot be a judge for today's books. We must judge now. Each reader is a judge. And he must look for that which serves him. He must find those books that lift his spirits, enlighten his mind, entertain his dull hours pleasurably, and lead him into new ventures of the imagination. A few books will do all of this so well that the reader will plunge in, bury himself, and know only that he has had an all-engrossing experience when he emerges on the other side. Only gradually will he really realize how much he has had. Many books will do one thing or another well for a reader, and no book that has any value at all can be discarded casually. For no one reader can be the final judge of any book that has any claim to value at all. It takes many readers to assess a book truly. And if enough readers over enough years find it a favorable venture, time may judge it a classic.

The Editor's Decision

The manuscript is off to a publisher. For some authors this is a moment of expectation, almost of triumph. The work is done, and they are sure it is good. For other authors this is a time of hesitation, because they are not sure others will see all that was meant to be in the book. For still others this is a time of separation and pain. They have grown accustomed to their work, to the familiar daily task that has engaged them. It is like sending a son to war to send a manuscript into the jostle of the marketplace.

For the editor who receives these manuscripts, the feelings are apt to be quite different. Any one manuscript generally arrives in the mail with several others, and although every editor hopes that one

manuscript among the many may show real genius, the tendency is to groan. An editor does not spend all of his or her office time reading manuscripts. Instead manuscripts tend to make up the editor's most insistent leisure time reading.

When a manuscript arrives, it is logged in. Each publishing house has its own system; and each system is designed to keep track of each manuscript, insure its being read by someone, and eventually record its final disposition in case the matter should ever come into question. Once it is properly recorded, it is put in a file where it awaits a reader.

All manuscripts will be read, even the one from the new-manuscript-every-week author and the one from the prophet who announces in his covering letter that his manuscript, if someone will have the foresight to publish it, will be the book that will shatter the world and raise up a new era unlike any previously seen (and all this in twenty pages in a second-grade vocabulary). The first reader of this gem and of almost all other manuscripts will not be the editor. It may be someone who does nothing but read manuscripts. Or it may be someone who has some secretarial, publicity, or editorial responsibilities in addition to reading. This person will read the manuscript, comment upon it, and then dispatch it in whatever way is customary in that house. If it is very bad, it may go right back after the first reader has seen it. But this depends on the house. In some places almost everything is eventually seen by an editor who is qualified to accept as well as reject a manuscript. That person may do no more than read the comments of the first reader and put the manuscript aside for return. Yet sometimes the editor may read a very bad book all the way through—just to see if it is really as bad as it seems, or to see how the author managed to get himself out of what seems to be an insoluble problem.

Of all the manuscripts that come to her, the editor will probably choose only a small pile for careful consideration. These will include: manuscripts from authors previously published by the house; manuscripts from authors who have published books elsewhere, per-

haps in another age bracket or subject area and whose submission seems to be up to the standards of the house; manuscripts on subjects and in areas that are of particular interest to the editor or are something she is eager to begin publishing; manuscripts the reader or readers have particularly enjoyed; manuscripts recommended by friends or friends of friends or business acquaintances that seem worth examination; and manuscripts that simply look interesting.

The other manuscripts, the ones the editor or her associates decide do not fit the needs or the standards of the house, are generally returned quickly, though an editor's definition of quickly may not correspond with that of an author. The manuscripts the editor decides to keep and examine more carefully will sit again in a pile and wait.

Eventually the editor reads the manuscript, each manuscript in her pile—some Saturday morning or some quiet evening at home. If she finds that it is not as good as she had hoped, not good enough to encourage at all, it will go back as soon as she can get a letter dictated. If there is a question in her mind—if it seems to have some value—it may wait still longer. It takes time to know what is right and what is wrong with a book that is good, but not quite good enough. If, on the other hand, the manuscript is all the editor hoped it would be, or if she can see quite easily where the author has not quite succeeded and is sure the author can achieve the goal he seemed to be reaching toward, then the author receives a letter announcing the acceptance of the book. Actually, acceptance may even look very much like rejection because the manuscript may go back for revision with the acceptance letter. One author tells about a manuscript that came back to her after several earlier rejections. Discouraged, she left the envelope unopened. But finally, one day she decided to open it and file it away. The letter that dropped out with the manuscript announced that it had been accepted, suggested some minor revisions, and inquired about terms of contract. That author never again left a manuscript unopened.

How and what an editor decides to do with any one individual

manuscript depends to a great extent on that editor. Almost every editor likes to think that all of the things enumerated in Chapter Five are a part of her thinking as she evaluates a work. And many of these things are there in the judging—some of them so deeply ingrained they create an almost unconscious basis for judgment. But just as no author is perfect, so no editor is perfect (fortunately—a perfect editor would be impossible for any author to endure). Each editor has her own interests, her own biases, her own prejudices, and her own reactions to a book. For one editor a sharp, well-controlled plot will be most important, and for another editor the author's sense of language will take precedence. No editor will place equal emphasis on all the possible criteria for a good book.

Neither will all editors place equal emphasis on the same kinds of books. Some prefer picture books, some fiction, some nonfiction and some poetry. Although one editor may select and work with many kinds of books, the things she likes best may well get her best attention, whether she realizes it or not.

As an editor selects books, how much the qualities of excellence are sought depends on the kinds of books being considered as well as on the thinking of the editor. There will be some things she feels she must always demand, and others she can regard with a less stringent eye. A book of humor, for example, may prove to be a thing of only passing interest with just a modicum of depth. It may be timely, interesting, well-plotted, well-charactered, but good for only five years, after which time society will have altered enough so that the humor will no longer maintain its edge. Yet, to many editors, this may be no reason for the book not to be published. Humor is needed, and if a book is well-written and carefully thought out it may deserve publication in spite of its flaws. If a book in which two small armies of boys—equipped with mock helmets, wooden flame-throwers, machine guns and camouflage suits—meet on a city street, and in the course of battle wind up playing jump rope with the neighborhood girls in order to prevent Terrible Tim the landlord

from discovering that they have trodden down his favorite dandelions is outdated in five years by the passing of the idea of war, the publishing of the book has done no harm, has entertained, and may even have helped achieve the new day. Not all things of value need be lasting. They need only be well done for what they are—honestly and capably done.

Not all books, many editors believe, need to evince a great literary style. A how-to-do-it book may need only to be clear, easy to follow, and correct. Creativity is in the finished product, not in the means to discovering the end. This is not to say that a how-to-do-it book can never be "literary" or written with flair. It is only to say that this may not be its chief function.

Any kind of nonfiction, in the eyes of many evaluators, may be somewhat less than literary if its purpose lies more in reaching a goal than in the means of getting there. This is especially true of material that must be prepared and dispensed in haste. A book on Italian fresco painters of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries can be long and lovingly done; the painters are going to be there a long time and the book will be as valuable in ten years as it is the day the idea is conceived. A book on contemporary pop music, however, must be quickly done, and there may not be time for elaborately polished prose; too much time in the writing and the music will have passed beyond note before the book can be published.

For the editor there are, however, many questions that go beyond merely deciding which qualities of good literature belong in any one book. One must also evaluate the quality of the things that do form a part of the book. One can define the basic elements of style, writing, organizing, plotting, and so forth. But just because one has defined them does not mean one can always recognize them or that they are always the same. They bend to current needs, and more—they change with the drift of time. Language changes, grammar changes, and approaches to literature change. The editor dare not

solidify her standards or her preferences too completely. It is the open mind that sees in a strange piece of writing the first hint of tomorrow's new ideal.

Yet even when the editor has decided that a work is worth publishing, she is not a world unto herself. She works for a publisher. (A word that typifies something in between the once fashionable view of a literary man in a leather-lined office dabbling in business, and the newer image of the tight-fisted, money-grabbing seeker of sensational best sellers, pandering to the lowest tastes of the book-buying bourgeois.) And she is also part of a department that functions as a unit of sorts, whose products must be sold. In short, books that are selected must be books that the department can handle effectively and that can be sold to some market, probably the market to which the department and the publisher direct most of their attention.

Publishing houses establish reputations for certain kinds of books. Mention Abrams and one thinks of art books. Say John Wiley & Sons and the image of a difficult college textbook rears up. These are adult books for the most part. But children's book departments are not so different. They are not quite so elaborately specialized, but one house may avoid picture books, another teen-age romances, and still another easy-to-read books. And though they try to vary their products, they somehow become known for one thing or another. Generally because they do it especially well. The books each house selects may almost unconsciously follow its image because it is the people who select who have created the image. Or the image may be deliberate, and the editor may be hired to edit the kinds of books the house does the best job of selling. At any rate a wise editor knows what kinds of books her house can sell well and what kinds of books may create problems. She may not always choose only the obvious. In fact, she is foolish if she does, because too much of anything can be deadly; there must be shifts and progress. But

when she knows a book will present sales problems, she will also try to have ideas of how to sell the book.

A publishing house may even have a limitation on the number of children's books it wants to publish. There is an optimum number of books a staff of a given size can read, edit, produce, publicize, and promote. Publish too few, and salaries eat up too high a proportion of the income. Publish too many, and something is skimped somewhere. So an editor may also have this to consider as new manuscripts are being decided upon. No matter how many good books come in, only so many can be taken, although a great book will undoubtedly not be rejected just because some limit has been reached.

Within the optimum number of books a department can produce, there are seldom specific stipulations for what these books shall be. Few if any publishers say in advance that, of a season's twenty books, five must be picture books; three, books of middle-grade fiction; two, easy-to-read books; six, nonfiction books for various ages with two in the area of biology, two in the area of the physical sciences, and two concerned with the arts; two, books of biography; and two, books of teen-age fiction. To establish a pattern in this way would almost certainly insure mediocrity for at least some titles. Certainly one wants variety. But if there are eight picture books on a publisher's list one season and none on the next and three the season after, no one but the publisher is really going to know it.

A list need not have balance, but it should have variety of tone and approach. If all the picture books in a season when there are ten are about domestic animals and all have the same colors and are to be issued in the same size and shape, then there are at least five or six too many on the list. But if each is distinctive, a book with a personality of its own, then ten can be just the right number. If the writing style and approach to material are the same in five books of middle-grade fiction, then something is wrong. The authors may all

be trying too hard to sound like the same successful author instead of being themselves, or the editor may be making all her authors into models of someone she admires. There is nothing wrong with five books of modern fiction on one list—not even five stories all basically telling of how Dahlya learned that girls could be weightlifters as well as boys, after her brother brought acclaim to the family with his prowess in the field—but five styles and five developments that all see the same thing from the same viewpoint and tell it in the same language is too much. In *The Ring and the Book*, Browning told the same story ten times and no one complained, because each story was different. The magic is in the difference.

A good list needs integrity. Anyone surveying it should feel that someone cared about every book on it. The “really big book,” the potential best seller that gets special attention, does not exist in children’s books as it does in adult books. Aside from the occasional “big name” book and books by authors whose works have proven to be especially popular in the past, the book that can be pushed to success by a heavy advertising budget appears infrequently and is as often a failure as a success. The reason for this is that the library is the primary market for most children’s books. The librarians who buy are a knowing, reading lot. They are not easily persuaded by publisher’s superlatives. Once a book shows evidence of becoming popular, it can be pushed to greater popularity, but it cannot be acclaimed in advance.

So a good editor of children’s books cherishes every book. Not all will receive treatment of equal lavishness. Each book is looked upon as an entity in itself, and is treated in such a way that the editing and the production emphasize the nature of the book. No book is given embellishments that are not appropriate to it. And no book is denied the best a publisher can give it just to keep it in line with other books. In a good list, the books are individual, and they look individual. If for some reason an editor knows she cannot give a book the treatment it needs, she will be wise not take it.

As an editor considers manuscripts to determine whether or not they will be on her list, it is the one that fits her idea of excellence, her interests, and her needs, and the one that will add variety and color to her list by nature of its individuality that stands the best chance. But only a chance. There are other considerations beyond excellence and variety and size of the list. Ideally these might determine an editor's choice, providing she is not misled by surface elements to overvalue a mediocre piece or undervalue an uncut gem. But in practice this is not always the case.

First of all, there must be common sense. What happens if a magnificent monkey story appears, and the editor, very partial to monkeys, already has eighteen monkey books in varying stages of preparation? Will the nineteenth, especially if all the books must appear in the same season, be one too many? No matter how good the manuscript is, the editor must consider how much it duplicates other material already accepted. If it duplicates too much, the chances are it should not be taken. Yet if that monkey book does approach the monkey world from a different aspect, it may fit. It may, in fact, be just what is needed. Or, if nineteen monkey books are too much in one year, this new book may be postponed until the next. The editor can at least write to the author and ask if he would be willing to accept the delay. If the publisher is known as the foremost publisher of monkey books, the author may very well agree, and the problem is solved. If not, the book may become the property of a less distinguished publisher of monkey books. And common sense will have triumphed in the editor's decision.

But supposing this problem does not exist. The manuscript on lion taming among the ancient Romans is a magnificent work. The list needs such a book. And the editor is eager for it. She reads the manuscript three times. Enthusiasm roars up and down her spine. She begins to see it as it will be: a large book—the manuscript is 750 pages—in a large trim size, say, 10 x 12—with 150 colored pictures. What a magnificent thing to have been a part of! Everyone

will want a copy. Bookstores will sell dozens. Librarians, even classrooms, will demand them. Or will they? A children's book that retails for \$40.00. The editor thinks again. It is a magnificent idea. But even if she could do a first printing of 75,000 copies (and she secretly knows that a first printing of more than 15,000 can happen only in a dream), it would be impossible to do the book at a price most people would be willing to pay. The bubble bursts, and the mighty manuscript must either be trimmed to manageable proportions or the author must look elsewhere for a publisher. Cost is an item that must be reckoned with in children's books. There is often a reluctance on the part of buyers to see that a book is more than paper and ink and covers, that there are many hidden expenses that must be covered by a price. Colored pictures, long text, complicated formats, graphs and charts, music, and many other things must therefore be considered very carefully before they are put into a book.

Music presents price problems? What can be the complication with music? Music is a problem because there is no machine that will adequately set music as type is set. The best music printing is still done from painstakingly drawn notes on preprinted lines. Music autographers prepare their carefully checked pages of music much as medieval monks once copied books by hand. Then the work of the autographer is photographed and the plates for the books are made from the photograph. Autographers are few and expensive.

The printing of music is only one of the production problems that can make an editor pause—or blanch. Books can require many things that for the usual publisher present production problems too great to contemplate. Some books require cut-out holes in the pages, a nightmare to production departments who frown on die-cutting of any sort (holes, pages of unequal size, any kind of unusual trimming). Some books require unusual paper or a color of ink that is difficult to get, difficult to use, or far too expensive. Some books de-

mand to be published in sizes or shapes that do not adapt well to the machinery available to most printers and binders. Standard books come in lengths divisible by eight, or preferably by sixteen or thirty-two. A usual picture book is thirty-two pages. Forty pages and forty-eight pages are common and twenty-four pages are possible. Twenty-eight pages, thirty-six pages, forty-four pages, or any such number may be accomplished, but only sometimes. And the determining factor may not be the publisher but the capabilities of his manufacturers. A picture book more than ten and one-fourth inches wide can be bound by machine only in a few binderies in the United States. Abroad there is a greater variety of equipment. Most big picture books come from abroad. Those lovely colored pictures on slick paper that used to appear in children's books, interspersed with the pages of text printed on softer paper, were tipped in—glued in—by hand, or wrapped around a signature (a grouping of eight, sixteen, or thirty-two pages). This is a hand process, and a really expensive one these days. These are a few, and only a few, of the problems even a good manuscript may present and that may send it off to the mailroom and back to the author.

In another case the editor may be forced to decide that a long story of the fight of the embattled albatross for life will not find a response in the great buying public equal to the author's enthusiasm. An author who can write, and who really cares about his subject, can make almost any subject interesting. But an exhaustive work on an obscure subject may only be exhausting to all but the expert. Obviously there is no call for an author to be shallow and superficial, but an author must approach his subject with some sense of balance. And if he does not, no matter how fine his work may be, it may not seem worth the cost of publication.

There are those who feel that editors and publishers should be above judging a book by its potential sales appeal. Nothing could be further from the truth. A publisher has a limited amount of capital to invest, no matter how large he is. If he invests all of his

money in books that sit in his warehouse, he has no money to spend on publishing books people really do want to read. And everyone loses. Not every book must be a best seller. But each book needs a potential minimum audience large enough to justify publication of the book at a price that that minimum audience will be willing to pay.

The editor, buried under the daily onslaught of manuscripts, buried under standards and criteria and house potentials and sales problems, may now seem a creature to be pitied. Her problems indeed are manifold. And when one considers the variety of submissions with which she must contend, and which she must consider with a calm, judicious eye: the two chapters and an outline by which she must judge an author's book; the finished manuscript of a thousand pages (yes, even in children's books); the submission of twenty-four separate animal stories each of which the author would like to see made into a picture book—and all published simultaneously; the fragment of a child's poetry carefully recorded by mama; the handwritten manuscript; the manuscript typed single-spaced on both sides of the sheet; the elaborate picture book dummy—size 24" x 36"; the really good book that somehow lacks an elusive sparkle; the technical book on the subject the editor failed in college; the hard-sell book—complete with potential sales markets and sales figures; all of the endless variety—one may wonder what could be worse. Worse would be a complete lack of manuscripts. Editors exist to read manuscripts, to choose those they like and to work with authors and production people to make books. Without manuscripts an editor would have to close her desk, or turn author herself.

Manuscripts come to editors from many sources. First of all, they come from authors the editor has worked with before. These are often the most eagerly received manuscripts. Sometimes the editor knows a great deal about a manuscript before it arrives; sometimes she knows nothing at all of what it may be. But whichever, such a manuscript is always viewed with enthusiasm and a special kind of

hope. When an editor has published one book by an author, she always hopes that he will produce more books that are not only equally good but progressively better. When an editor and a publisher accept a first manuscript, they hope they are committing themselves to more than one book. Establishing a new author requires effort and time. A first book does not always reach all of the people who might enjoy having it, or even all of those who might need it, because the author's name is new and buyers, with vast numbers of books to choose among, may find the book easy to pass by. But if a first book reaches a goodly number of people and interests those it does reach, the second book will attract the audience for the first and probably a few more readers beyond. At least, publishers hope this will be true. And they hope that third and fourth and fifth books will each find for themselves a gradually expanding group of followers. Of course, if a first book is a great success, so much the better. Then succeeding books, if as good, will have a fine, large, built-in readership.

But it is not only a hope for sales that an editor invests in a first book. It is also part of her professional skill. She hopes when she chooses a first book that she is seeing not only a good book, but an author behind it who has promise, one she can develop a rapport with, encourage and promote over a considerable period of time. All editors make mistakes. Sometimes an author is a one-book author. Sometimes an author is a no-book author, for even the first one may not be as good as it seemed. Sometimes the author and editor find they do not work easily together. Then the relationship is broken. But the hope that a new book from a published author raises, and the special bit of joy it creates when it is good, or the eager concern it brings forth when it does not seem quite right, belong to no other manuscripts that arrive. These may be the most difficult submissions of all to appraise because the editor wants so much for them to be good. They are the hardest to reject, certainly, if rejected they finally must be.

Will it be accepted, the manuscript that comes from a published

author, just because the editor has once before accepted that author's work? If it has promise at all, it will be, unless the list has changed or the author has written a book that is totally outside the scope of the publisher's or the editor's interest. Even if it is not a good book, it may be published if the editor believes that the author had a strong reason for writing the book and had to do it before he could go on to something better. But it will not be accepted, probably, if it is a bad book and there is no reason to justify it and no promise of more to come that will be better, if it is too like the first or earlier books to justify its existence, or if the author has simply not done the best he could do and needs to be challenged to improve.

Books by published authors have a special place. All other manuscripts form one great lump of things to be read and decided upon. They arrive at the publisher from many sources. They come from agents, friends (of authors, editors, librarians, other people in the publishing house), and from people who simply choose a publisher and send a manuscript.

There are more manuscripts from agents now than there ever have been before. And there are more agents interested in children's books now than there ever have been before. The increased numbers of children's books being published and the increased sales for many books have attracted the agents. And many of them have discovered that children's books can be interesting to handle, that they are books with something to say. The main advantage of an agent for the children's author is that an agent knows the market. An author could spend several years, since publishers sometimes hold a manuscript for two or three months, finding the publisher most likely to do his book. The agent might send the book to that publisher first. An agent can also be a help with contracts and subsidiary rights. An agented manuscript in all probability will not be read more quickly or be judged more kindly by the editor than any other. All manuscripts are read. And even if a word from an agent does make an editor eager to see a book and move it out of the to-

be-read pile more quickly than might otherwise be the case, no manuscript will ever be accepted just because an agent thinks it is good. It is the agent's job to see the best in each manuscript he sends out, and to sell it if he can; and the editor knows this. Whether an author has an agent or not should depend on the author. The one who feels more comfortable with an agent should have one.

Other manuscripts come from friends—of everybody. Anyone who works for a publisher or knows someone who works for a publisher may find himself acting as messenger, because almost every author is convinced that some kind of personal contact, however tenuous, assures his manuscript a more careful reading. Sometimes, too, an author simply does not know where to send a manuscript, and anyone who can make a suggestion or give a bit of help seems a true friend. A manuscript that comes with a note from a friend is logged in and read with the same care as every other manuscript. How much attention it receives generally depends on how good it is. In some cases, though, if the friend is a person with good taste and is genuinely recommending the material, an editor's eagerness to read the manuscript may be increased. If a good author recommends that a friend or acquaintance send in a book, the editor is interested. She is also interested in manuscripts really recommended to her by other people in publishing or by librarians. But there is a difference between really recommending and acting as an impartial go-between. And most editors have learned to recognize the difference.

Then there are some books that come from new authors but that receive special attention because they are expected. In these cases the author has sent his book to that editor because the editor has chosen the author. The book has been suggested or even commissioned by the editor. It is hard to commission fiction. But an editor can read something an author of adult fiction, say, has written and come away convinced that that person could write a children's book. If it is possible to do so, she may approach the author and make her

suggestion. The result may be a book, which can appear any time from two weeks to ten years later. It may turn out to be a book on captive children of the Comanches, when the editor was sure it would be a science-fiction book. But it will be a book she has in a way instigated, nevertheless, and one she must consider seriously. In nonfiction, suggesting books to authors is somewhat easier and more predictable. A man who is the world authority on Chinese landscape painting is the logical one to acquaint children with that specialty, provided he wants to write for them at all. An editor who feels certain that there is a reasonable amount of interest in Chinese landscape painting and wants a children's book on the subject, might well seek out this man to do the book. She might even give him a contract just on the basis of his interest. An editor who wishes to commission a book on a given subject seeks out either a person who can write and who is capable of doing good research on the subject, or a person who knows the subject well. Once a book is firmly commissioned, the publisher is committed. The results can be great, or they can be devastating. Even under the best of circumstances it is a gamble, but sometimes a gamble worth taking.

The great mass of manuscripts come in from no agent, as a result of no request, accompanied by no friend, and recommended only by the author. Even that not always. Some authors do not even send a letter along, only the return envelope. All these manuscripts are read, at least in part. Even the most rigid masochist would not inflict some of them on himself in their entirety, not because they are so full of awful mistakes or horrid events. These can prove interesting. But simply because they are dull. They are like tired old dinosaurs plodding their way through the tar pits. Every word, every sentence clumps. And nothing happens. Eventually it all bogs down and dies. At the other extreme, and equally impossible, are those books in which everything happens, books that leave the reader breathless as the author jumps from one daredevil sequence to the next with never a pause for character or background to catch up.

Aside from these two extremes, which no one can endure for long, most books are at least skimmed all through by someone.

Although there are piles and piles of manuscripts to be read, the editor actually encourages the arrival of more. The next one might be the one, the very one, she has always wanted to discover. Obviously she does not encourage anything that has no chance of being accepted at all. But anything that is in any way likely is encouraged. After all, the more there are to choose from, the more there may be that are worth the choosing.

What is chosen will in the end reflect many things: the editor's taste, the shape of the list, the policy of the house, and the needs of the house at any given time. If an author receives a letter that says, "We like your book but there is no place for it on our list," he should believe it. Every editor rejects books she knows are publishable—if not as they are, then certainly with some revision. Either she does not need the book at that moment, never does that kind of book, or has no time to give the author the help that is needed. What an editor takes are the books she cannot make herself reject because they interest her and/or they seem just right for her list at that moment. This is only reasonable. No one publisher can publish all the good books. And no editor is infallible. All editors accept and reject good books.

For the manuscript that is accepted, the last step—and the first of something new—is a contract. The contract may come after submission of several chapters and an outline, after submission of a complete manuscript, or it may not come until after one or more revisions. But come it must before publication is sure. The contract will establish the rights in the book for the author and the publisher, will determine the day when the manuscript should be delivered in a final form, will set a time limit for production of the book, and will tell the author how much royalty he will get and what his advance against royalties will be. The latter is a sum of money paid to the author on signing the contract or on delivery of the completed

manuscript (or both) that is deducted, as contracts say, "from all monies due under the terms of this contract." The contract may also bind the author to the publisher for a given number of subsequent books—anywhere from one to three—either of the same kind or of any kind. It is almost impossible to say what is fair in all contracts. Each contract must be determined by the book, the author, and the publisher. If most picture books give a five percent royalty to the author and a five percent royalty to the illustrator, and if most books for older children pay a ten percent royalty, unless there are unusual circumstances, this does not mean that this must always be the case. The matter of contract is a topic for endless debate—by agents' groups, by authors' groups, and by publishing groups—sometimes together and sometimes individually. What is important in the end is that the publisher (represented by the editor) and the author trust and respect each other and feel that each is doing the best he can. If this is true, then problems that arise before a contract is signed or after can be resolved to the satisfaction of all.

What should matter most to everyone concerned with the manuscript—author, editor, agent if there is one, and whoever else is involved—is that the book, if a book the manuscript is to become, be the best possible book. It is important for the author to submit his work, if he can, to the house or houses he thinks would most likely make of his manuscript the kind of book he visualizes. And it is important that an editor select for publication those manuscripts that she respects enough to want to give every possible advantage.

From Publisher to Finished Book

"Hello, is this the editor of children's books?"

"Yes, may I help you?"

"Well, my name is Wentworth, and I sent you a manuscript a week ago last Tuesday. That's ten days ago, now. And I got a card saying you'd received it, but I haven't heard anything more. And I just thought I'd check. It's only a short manuscript, just ten pages, about this elf that works for Santa Claus. And being October, it's getting near to Christmas and I'm kind of anxious to see it come out. So I thought I'd better call . . ."

Why does it take so long? Why does an author wait weeks to hear whether or not anyone has even read his book? And then, if it

is accepted, wait weeks and weeks—more, months and even years—to see it published. There's never any rush, the author thinks, except when the author himself is supposed to do something. Then it's here today and back tomorrow or some mystical schedule will be forever upset. Why?

The answers begin with the fact that the editor to whom good manuscripts go for decision does not spend her days presiding in judgment. There may be times when she sits with a tall pile of submissions in front of her, casting some to the outer darkness of form rejection letters, some to the nearer circle of tentative rejection—rejection with comment—and bringing a few into the light of closer scrutiny for possible acceptance. But these times do not happen often. Most days are full of doing other things. These things may be editing, talking to authors, seeing artists, actually laying out a picture book, consulting with people in the production department about books in process, consulting about contracts for accepted manuscripts, handling some aspect of foreign rights or subsidiary rights, arranging speaking schedules for successful authors, speaking herself, or taking part in publishing committee activities of various sorts. These are a few of the many things that may enter into a day. The reason it takes so long to get a manuscript read is that there is so very little time for reading. Perusing manuscripts may be the basis, the foundation, of an editor's existence, but the skyscraper of other tasks takes up much more space in her life.

Foremost among these is the work of editing. Editing is the process by which an editor helps an author make his book the book he hoped it would be. Some books need little editing, some need a great deal. The essence of editing is knowing which is which, and giving what is needed, that much and no more.

Each editor has her own approach to editing. When a likely book appears from a new author most editors probably read the manuscript more than once. It is important to have a first impression, and it is also important to confirm or reject that first impression with a

second reading, and sometimes even a third and a fourth. Generally the editor is trying to determine what the author thought he was accomplishing in the book, how well he succeeded, and where he failed.

A first letter to an unknown author or a first interview with him seldom deals with small details. In the beginning minor flaws in style, sentences that don't quite say what they mean, awkward phrases, especially if they occur in isolated instances and not throughout the book, do not matter. The important thing is the entire shape of the book. If poor writing of one kind or another is an overall problem, then it is to be considered; if there are holes in the material, they must be filled up. Whatever keeps the book from rounding out its contours and becoming a unified whole is the place to start. The letter or conference at this first stage may point out what is good and what is lacking. It may even discuss some aspects of theory behind writing, point out some valid general criteria for good writing that the author may never have encountered. The object is to get the author's mind working again on the book, and to help him do so from a point of view that will allow him to see it as others do. If necessary, what is said should even drive him to making the whole thing into far more than he had planned, but the book that his work nevertheless can become, because the possibility is apparent in what has already been done.

Each such dealing with an author is obviously quite different from every other, because each manuscript is different, and each author is different. And the editor's reaction is also different. Sometimes the editor may find herself angry because an author has almost done something magnificent and then failed at the end when there was no reason for failure, or has continuously done some foolish thing that a careful author should know better than to do. Other times the editor finds herself hesitant and careful, because what the author has created is delicate, and revisions must be approached gently and lovingly. Still other times, the editor may be frankly baffled,

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because the idea or the writing or something in the book is too good to let go, but so much is wrong it is hard to know how to keep the good and suggest reform for the bad.

Each good book calls forth a different response from an editor. But in any case, an editor dare not tread too far, especially at the beginning. Editors are needed because few authors are good editors themselves. An editor can point out the flaws the author cannot see. But an editor dare not try to remake a book into something it is not or an author into something he is not, or the book will lose its life and individuality. An editor can be like a sculptor who releases from a block of marble the form that seems to be already there, carving away that which is unnecessary. But an editor cannot melt down a bronze sculpture and cast it again in a totally different form.

An editor hopes that an author with whom she has a long talk or who receives a long letter about a manuscript will consider what has been said in the same way the editor has tried to read the manuscript—with care and thought. The author need not agree with all the editor has said. But the author needs to try to see why the editor feels as she does. The author needs to ask what there is in the manuscript that would prompt such a reaction. If the author has written a book on painted daisies, and has spent a whole chapter rhapsodizing on the beauties of a field of painted daisies, and the editor has said that the chapter seems unnecessary—that the chapters on the root system, the stem, the leaves, the flower development and color, and the family tree of the painted daisy seem enough—the author may well consider what his purpose in initiating the chapter was. If his intention was to show in a broad sense the natural habitat of the painted daisy, and the part the daisy plays in the landscape of a certain area, he may just not have made his point well. If he was simply being poetic and he can see himself that that chapter is different from all the rest of the book, the editor is probably right. Perhaps the chapter should be cut and made into a foreword. Or perhaps it

doesn't belong at all. This is for the author to decide. He has been given a chance to see his book through other eyes, to see what he has succeeded in doing for someone else and what he may have failed to do, not only through the editor's specific comments, but through a comparison of his intentions with the editor's reaction. If the author concedes that what he learns from these are relevant, then he may revise. If they do not seem relevant, he is free to send his manuscript elsewhere.

If an author chooses to revise, does so, and returns the manuscript with revision, a new decision confronts the editor. To accept or not to accept. Actually it is not quite that simple. The editor has a number of choices open: take the manuscript as is; take the manuscript if the author agrees to do still more revision; suggest that the manuscript is improved but is not yet ready to be accepted, although further revision may help; or reject the manuscript outright.

If an author has simply taken the editor's suggestions at their surface value, made the suggested changes in a superficial manner and returned the manuscript, the editor is likely to reject it. The manuscript will probably not be much better. It may even be worse. Superficial patches seldom improve a work. Furthermore, the editor has no means by which to gauge the capacity of the author to write or to rethink his material, since he has put nothing of himself into what he has done. And, finally, the author has proved himself more eager to get published than to create a good book, which seldom bodes well for an author's future efforts.

A manuscript will be rejected at this point also if the author has not proved himself capable of improving his book, regardless of what he has done. If the book was not good enough to be accepted in the first place, and if it is no better after revision, it is unlikely ever to improve.

If a manuscript is improved, however, it must be carefully considered. If the author has done a thoughtful revision, and if the results are an improvement, it will likely be good enough to receive very

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careful attention, even if it is still not ready for publication. If further revision is needed, another long letter or consultation is in order, possibly accompanied by notes written on the manuscript itself, pointing out specific things that are good and specific things that need improvement. In some cases the editor may even decide to show how portions of the manuscript could be rewritten in order to achieve the author's goal more successfully. Such rewriting is not so much a preparation of finished copy, as it is an establishing of some sort of guideline for revision or a demonstration of a technique the author may not have thought about using. Such suggestions may be sweeping, showing how entire portions of the book should or could be redesigned; or they may be minor, demonstrating ways of building up small background details into a consistent, mood-evoking picture or weeding out small flaws in the author's style—undue repetition of words or phrases, faulty use of some kind of clause, constant employment of unpleasant sentence patterns.

If the editor and the author are both serious about the book in question, a book may go through many revisions. Revising will go on until both are satisfied or until the editor knows that further revision will be more detrimental than helpful. Once major problems have been cared for, minor issues will be attacked, until everyone is more or less satisfied.

The manuscript, as finally acknowledged to be complete by author and editor, must still be the author's book. It will be if the editor is skillful and honest. No matter how much help the editor has given, it will have been given within the framework of the author's thinking, the author's style, and the author's potential as a writer. When the revising is over, each will have learned something about the other and something about the writing of books.

A manuscript by an author the editor knows and has worked with will go through much the same process as a manuscript from a new author. The difference is that author and editor know each other and understand each other. The editor will not have to sound

out the author's capabilities. Her first approach can be more direct and to the point than it would be with a new author. The editor may try to explore at once not only the major problems, but most of the minor ones as well, and may make notes on the manuscript immediately to try to be as helpful as possible. The editor's great hope is that if an author needed considerable help on a first book, the second will not need so much and the third and fourth and beyond will each need less and less, until there may even come a time when only minor flaws in spelling and grammar need to be cleaned up.

Not all work that an editor does is done on completed manuscripts, however. Some books, especially books from established authors, are submitted in an incomplete form—one or two chapters and an outline. Most often these are books of nonfiction. The editor must judge the worth of the material primarily on the basis of the idea. If the idea appeals to her, she may accept the book and then help the author achieve what he has in mind by careful analysis along the way, before all the work is done. Yet even if she has helped along the way, the final manuscript may not be what the editor thought it was going to be. If it is not, and the book was accepted earlier, the editor may have a problem. If the book is a good book and just not what she had anticipated, the problem is the small one of simply revising her ideas or plans for the production of the book. But if the book is not good—if it does not live up to the promise of its initial submission—the problem is great. The author can be asked to revise, of course. But if he proves incapable of it, the editor may resort to the time-consuming business of rewriting it herself. This is an end to be avoided if possible. In the first place, to do it too often would be to have too many books on a list written in the same style. It is possible, of course, to affect another style when necessary. It is especially possible to imitate fairly well the style of a mediocre author. But unfortunately a manuscript that needs extensive rewriting seldom evinces a style worth copying. In the second place, to do a good job requires an endless amount of time. And

few editors have this much time. Rewriting a book is a last resort. Fortunately it need not be done too often. Most books accepted on the basis of an incomplete manuscript are accepted because the author is a professional writer, a known quantity.

Other times when an editor may rewrite are: when an illustrator has a good idea for a book, but is not really a writer himself; when an expert in a field produces a good book but one not quite right for his intended audience; when a good author or a good potential author has a good idea but for some reason can't quite get enough perspective on the idea to give the book unity; and when a translator captures the words but not the spirit of a book imported from abroad.

Rewriting in extensive amounts is not generally the editor's job. Her job is helping the author to perfect his own book and realize his own potential. It is also checking facts to make sure they are accurate; advising in purely mechanical problems like obtaining permission to use copyrighted material; encouraging authors to produce—giving them confidence when they need it and sometimes advice when they would rather not have it but need it; acting as a sounding board for authors who want to try out new ideas; comforting and consoling authors when the writing is not going well; and seeing a manuscript through to a bound book and beyond into the marketplace.

The first step beyond editing is generally copy editing. The editor and the copy editor are seldom the same person. It is best if they are not. Almost always the editor has become far too familiar with a book by the time it is ready for copy editing to do an effective job of checking punctuation, spelling, grammar, stray facts and awkward phrasing. This takes a fresh eye, one that does not automatically see what it thinks it sees.

Some publishers have accepted practices in copy editing that must be followed: the series comma is always or never used; a sentence never begins with *and*; no incomplete sentences are allowed; dashes are eliminated whenever possible, and so on. A house style book

may spell out the rules: list words that are always hyphenated, never hyphenated, or hyphenated under specific conditions; indicate words that are always capitalized, or never capitalized. Such a guide is useful, but it can be a nightmare to an author who has his own ideas—and many do.

Other publishers tend to use one or two general handbooks, like the University of Chicago Press's *A Manual of Style*, as guides, and try to allow the author as much freedom as possible. Some authors adore commas; they want to use them even where they are not needed. Other authors can't abide commas and use them only when driven to it. Some authors don't even like periods. e. e. cummings did not like capital letters, at least not often. Obviously, except in the case of poetry, some standards must exist. Writing presumably exists to be read, and if an author's preferred idiosyncrasies of grammar prevent understanding, something must be done. Yet, it is possible to be flexible and allow some freedom of choice. The author who likes commas can reasonably be allowed a lot more of them than the author who does not.

A copy editor should and does take as much license as an author gives. If an author is careless and sloppy, he may get more copy editing than he really wants because it is hard for the copy editor to know what is intentional and what is accidental. The careful author may sometimes get less copy editing than he wants because the copy editor may assume that all but the most obvious slips are intended.

If a great many copy-editing changes are made, the manuscript is generally returned to the author for his approval. The copy editor may also note questions for the author to answer—small discrepancies and errors in fact that have slipped through.

From copy editing a manuscript goes to the typesetter; but even before typesetting another very important matter in a children's book has been considered—illustration. Few children's books appear without pictures. And few people who look at these pictures realize the problems that lie behind their creation.

Generally the editor is responsible in one way or another for se-

lecting an illustrator. Some editors have design or production people who produce suitable choices of illustrator for a given title. Other editors see scores of illustrators in almost the same way they see manuscripts. Whoever does the screening, the selection must be made out of a seemingly endless stream of prospective artists. The one chosen must be right for the specific book in hand. The kind of illustration, the amount of illustration, and the techniques to be employed in the illustrations vary from book to book, and from subject to subject. One can find a marvelous illustrator who does a perfectly splendid job on a book about Judith and Holofernes (or Susannah and the Elders), but how many times does one need semi-Biblical realism? Maybe only once. The style that suits one book does not necessarily suit another. And it is important to find an illustrator for each book who not only feels a sympathy for that book but whose illustrations will express the mood of the book. Good illustrations are more than lines or lines and color on a page, they are an integral part of the book. They do not merely picture the text, they are an expression of the same ideas in another medium.

Some artists come with books. In other words, some artists write their own books, and some have teamed up in advance with an author. This happens most often in picture books. And it is fine if the artist has good book ideas himself and can express his ideas fairly well in words as well as in pictures, or if the author and artist who have pooled their work are about equally talented. If, however, the artist's ideas are too slight, too flat and dull, too silly, too much a shrine for his illustrating talent, he is wasting his time illustrating his own material and is perhaps endangering his chances of illustrating someone else's book. In a joint effort, if an artist is more capable than the author whose story he has illustrated, he is again wasting both time and talent. On the other hand, if the author is better than the illustrator, the author is wasting his opportunity because his book would probably be accepted more readily without pictures. No manuscript needs pictures to sell itself to an editor, especially not poor pictures.

Picture books, of course, present the greatest problems in finding the right artist. Most authors have some kind of illustrations in mind when they write a picture book text. If they have not envisioned specific illustrations, they at least have some specific style in mind. (Many manuscripts from never-published authors suggest that Maurice Sendak, Leo Lionni, or even Andy Warhol would be the perfect illustrator for the tale they tell.) It is the publisher's responsibility to choose the illustrator for a picture book, but most try to take the author's preferences into consideration, and all try to find the illustrator who will make the manuscript into a unified book. For this, the author's vision of the finished book is important, because it is part of the author's concept of what he has done.

When an editor has a picture book that needs an illustrator—say, a dashing story of a villainous pirate who kidnaps a small boy and finds himself the victim of a small tyrant who shepherds the pirate's crew through dastardly deeds and returns home to a worshipful mother and to police who cart off the pirates—she wants an illustrator who will give the book what it needs. She searches through the file of photostats and other mementos left by visiting artists. She thinks about all the artists she knows. And she goes to a bookstore or library and looks at other publisher's books. If she is lucky, somewhere she will find evidence that some artist, either old or new, has a sense of humor, draws in a daring style, uses color with the splash of a pirate, and knows something about ships, seas, and sailing. If she is very lucky, this person will be available and will decide that this book is the book he has always wanted to illustrate. The editor will settle, however, for his being available and enjoying the story enough to want to illustrate it.

Does the editor then bring the author and illustrator together? If the author lives in California and the illustrator in New York, obviously not. If they both live in the same area, however, a meeting is possible. Whether or not it happens generally lies with the editor's discretion. If she feels they will get on well together and one will help the other, then she will see that it happens, if they both want

it. If one or the other is a very determined person, however, or for that matter if they both are, the question of a meeting may take some consideration. A very strong-minded author can so dominate an artist that he is not able to exercise any of his own creative talent and tries instead to please the author. The result may please no one. On the other hand, a too-determined illustrator can talk an author into rewriting a book that does not need rewriting, in order to give the illustrator broader scope for his drawing talent. Two strong-minded people may handle each other very well, or they may destroy between them what could have been a fine book.

Whether author and illustrator meet or not, the illustrator's first chore is to create a dummy. He, with or without help from the editor or a designer, will break up the text into pages and work out the pictures he would like to draw. The actual dummy he creates may be very small, smaller than he plans the book to be, it may be actual size, or it may even be larger than he thinks the book should be. The drawings may be very sketchy, or they may be quite complete and even include suggestions of the colors the artist hopes to have in the finished book. At some point, certainly before he does any finished drawings, he will confer with the editor and possibly someone from the publisher's production staff to determine the final size of the book and the amount of color to be used.

If the artist chosen to illustrate the pirate book makes a huge dummy, say fourteen inches high and twelve and three-quarters inches wide, and if he splashes on it every color known to man, in order to give the book the proper degree of boldness, the editor and her production people may well agree that this would make a handsome book. But they may sensibly insist that the artist restrain himself to a size of ten inches high and eight and seven-eighths inches wide. If he makes his book this size, they may tell him, they can allow him to have four colors, separated. The artist may demur. So small! And all that work on separations! He may feel cheated. But the production department may then point out that his ideal book

would have a retail price of \$8.95, maybe more. The second they may be able to price at \$4.50. The artist sighs and resigns himself.

Separation is a technique whereby the artist does what a camera would do if a picture painted in many colors were being reproduced. If one were to reproduce the Mona Lisa in a children's book, for example, one would not expect Leonardo da Vinci to make separations for his painting. The separations would have to be done by camera. The camera would photograph the picture at least four times: once for red, once for blue, once for yellow, and once for black. The colors put back together would theoretically reproduce the original, since all colors can be made from the three primary colors. Four-color reproduction would not be likely to reproduce all the subtle shades of the Mona Lisa, however. To reproduce it well, one might have to photograph in six or eight or ten colors. And much hand labor would be needed on the resulting films to get just the variations desired. Color on the film would be represented by small dots; many heavy dots in an area where the color was to be heavy; a few small dots in an area where the color was to be pale. In some places dots would overlay each other. Blue and yellow dots together would make green, etc. From the film, eventually, plates would be made, one plate for each color. The plates would be fastened to a press, arranged so that each color would print individually on the paper, one after another, and each color as it printed would appear in exactly the right places on the paper as it ran through the press; if all went well, the Mona Lisa would arrive at the other end. But anyone who has seen the Mona Lisa itself and then seen reproductions of the painting knows that even the best reproduction is not quite like the original. Photographic separation is uncertain at best; and it is always expensive, primarily because of the hand retouching needed.

So the pirate artist must do separations. Then the publisher can save the cost of the separating photography and the hand labor to correct the dots; and the skillful artist can control the finished prod-

uct. The artist will choose the four colors he wishes to use, remembering that the text must print in one of his colors. What he chooses need not be primary colors, but one will probably be black, brown, or dark blue. He will probably make his basic drawings in black on artist's board regardless of what color they may eventually print in. Then he will use some transparent substance, plastic or paper, for each of the other colors. For each finished illustration there will be the basic drawing on board and an overlay for each of the other three colors, making four pieces in all. All of the art, regardless of colors chosen, will probably be done in black or in some color that photographs well. There will be some kind of mark on each overlay, corresponding to a mark on the basic board, to show the exact position of that overlay with respect to the drawing on the board. On the overlay the places will be filled in where the color represented by that overlay should appear on the picture. If the artist plans to use two colors to make a third color, the places where each will be needed for the third color will also be filled in. It is a long, tedious job, especially when one is dealing with very complex or detailed pictures. But some artists actually prefer to do this because then they know exactly how their finished art will look in reproduction. The artist whose work is to be camera separated never knows for sure just what will happen, no matter how careful the printer may be.

Once the actual size and amount of color have been determined for a book, the artist can go ahead—providing the editor and maybe the author approve of what he has done in his dummy. An artist must be allowed freedom in his interpretation of a text. He is not an automaton. He is a living, thinking, creative individual who has his own good ideas, and he should be allowed to express them. However, if in his dummy he has completely missed the point of the book, if his dummied throws all the text onto two pages and makes all the rest of the book pictures, if he has left no place at all for text (many artists tend to think words unnecessary), if the spirit

of what he has done seems wrong, if his whole approach seems sloppy and ill conceived, if, in other words, he does not seem to be using sense as well as creativity, then the editor must either help him to see what the book should be or, if she cannot, find a new artist.

Even when the finished picture book illustrations are presented, changes may be needed. The finished pictures may not realize the promise of the dummy. The separations may be incomplete, with part of the color missing. There may be disconcerting discrepancies in detail. If possible, these should be discovered and fixed; but like the text itself, sometimes one is so sure of what one is seeing that it is hard to see what is not there, or what is there but should not be. For this reason color pictures are almost always proofed before printing.

Artwork for a longer book, either of fiction or nonfiction, one that does not require colored pictures and perhaps will have few pictures at all, presents the same problems and a different problem. The editor still needs to find an artist who cares about the book and who can do what is necessary to create the desired pictures. She still needs someone with a creative approach, an artist who is willing to try something new if the book demands it. But the future of this book does not depend to so large an extent on the artist's skill as it does in a picture book.

Still the problems are large. The same artist will not do for a book on genetic variations in fruit flies as will do for a book on a teen-age narcotics addict coping with both the normal day-to-day problems of the adolescent and the demands of his habit. And the artists who will do for these will not do for a book about Big Elk, the Indian boy of pre-Columbian Michigan, who ponders over a strangely made stone knife secured in intertribal trading and who as a result longs to see what lies beyond his tribal lands.

The first book would require an artist who could draw detailed creatures, who understood how to do charts and diagrams, perhaps,

and who did not mind extensive scientific research. Yet it would also have to be someone with imagination. An entire book with pictures of nothing but fruit flies would be dull, and the pictures would serve no purpose. Actually, the author, or more probably the editor, would determine what should be illustrated. The text would serve as a guide, but the pictures would not necessarily merely repeat what was in the text, but would explain and extend it. There would be diagrams of inheritance patterns, sketches of portions of fruit flies to show variations in inheritance, and perhaps pictures of equipment used to conduct studies and, if possible, pictures that relate the studies to the experience of children. The intent of the pictures would be to attract the attention of possible readers, to lighten the look of the text by breaking it up with attractive drawings, and to extend the text and interpret it. It is probable that the pictures would all be in black and white. Only the color of the fruit flies' eyes would seem to make color necessary (a matter of inheritance), and these could be easily indicated by shading, cross-hatching, or labeling. To find an artist who could do these black-and-white drawings for a price within the budget for the book could mean a long hard search. Artists who do detailed drawings are not hard to find, but those who like to do detailed, accurate drawings on so remote a subject are not abundant.

The second book, about the teen-age addict, would probably require few pictures, especially if the book were fiction. This is a book for young adults, and it needs to look as much like an adult book as possible. Here what is needed is a competent jacket artist, one who can re-create the starkness, the rawness, and the desperation of the addict in one quick, eye-catching statement. Color is no problem here. If there are no inside pictures to buy and reproduce, the budget will probably allow a three- or four-color separated jacket. Maybe even full color. The important thing is to find the illustrator with the sympathy and the style to do a jacket that has meaning and will be attractive.

In the third instance, the story of the Indian boy, one must find an illustrator who can make Indians look like people and not like "the noble savage" or like modern-day people at a Hallowe'en party. It must be an artist who will not put forest Indians into plains wigwams, or fully dressed Indians into semi-nakedness. But it must also be someone who will do his research, know what is needed for his details, and then be able to give himself to the story; who will not have to be so concerned with getting the details right that he creates stick figures who have no emotional stake in the movements they enact.

In all three of these cases, the illustrators probably will not design the book, determine its shape, have any say about the amount of color inside (probably none in any of them), or even specify the approximate number of pictures. This will be done by the publisher. This does not mean that the illustrator will have nothing to say about what he does. In some cases he may be handed a manuscript or a set of galleys and be told to do twelve pictures or fifteen pictures, to be scattered through the book. Then he will do what he chooses. He will be given the trim size of the book, and he will do his full-page, part-page, or whatever else, pictures at random. This system leaves something to be desired. Pictures in a children's book should accompany the text they illustrate. And in the paging of a book, there are times when a previously done picture simply will not fit where it belongs. If the text a picture illustrates happens to fall at the bottom of a right-hand page, for example, and if the text at the top of the next page moves on to something else, there is simply no way to place the picture with text. A better system is to set the type in galleys, page the galleys, leaving specific spaces for pictures, and then give these paged galleys to the illustrator. The illustrator then receives the galleys, a list of the pictures to be done, and an indication of the exact amount of space he has for each picture. If he does not like one or two of the pictures to be done, changes in paging can be made, within limits. But the best system is to let the

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illustrator read a second copy of the manuscript while the type is being set. He can then make a list of all the pictures he would like to do, the size he would prefer to do them, and the ones he likes best. Then when the galleys arrive, they can be paged using the illustrator's own preferences, as far as possible, in both picture content and size. He will then be doing the pictures he has chosen, and everyone will know that they will fit where they belong.

The responsibilities of a black-and-white artist for a book that is primarily text are twofold: he must be accurate, and he must add life to the book. His technique may be any: line, line and halftone, woodcut, linoleum cut; and his style may be any: realistic, stylized, very loose and open, surrealist, whatever he prefers. But within the limits of his technique and style (and he probably will have been chosen because the kind of thing he prefers to do seems right for the book), the pictures must accurately portray what happens in the text and the background atmosphere of the story. And he must do this with a sense of life and enthusiasm; people must look as if they are moving through the actions of the book unaware of an audience. A wise illustrator will illustrate only books he really likes. Most illustrators also find it a help to do a variety of books. Some do thrive on plunging themselves deeper and deeper into one small area of interest, in order to perfect what they do. But most grow bored with doing the same thing continually. They need to keep pushing out the perimeter of their experience in order to keep themselves in trim.

How the book for older children looks, and to some extent how the picture book looks also, is determined not only by the illustrator, but also by the person who designs the book. This will generally be someone who works for the publisher. The designer begins work when the editing is over. The editor deposits the copy-edited manuscript on the designer's desk. The designer is busy and cannot take care of it just then. Three days or three weeks later the designer arrives in the editor's office, manuscript in hand, and says, "Now what

shall I do with this?" The editor explains the story, suggests other books on the list that are somewhat similar in content, and, if she can, explains who the artist is or what kind of art she hopes to get. Some time later the designer is back. This time he or she brings in suggestions for a type face. The type, both editor and designer know, needs to be a certain size. It cannot be too small or the audience will be discouraged. It cannot be too large or the book will look too young. The type must bear some relationship to the contents of the book and to the weight of the proposed illustration. A heavy type does not look right with light, wispy illustrations, and vice versa. But then, the illustrations, too, are chosen, or at least the illustrator is chosen, to match the text. So type and pictures should blend.

The trim size—that is, the finished page size—of the book must also seem appropriate to the contents. And the type size must be right for the page size. Except in very unusual picture books, a very large type on a very small page looks a little strange. On the other hand, very small type on very large pages, unless the type is set in narrow columns, is almost impossible to read—the line is too long. The margins around the type must be comfortable; they must be wide enough to make the page seem generous and open, but must not be so wide the book buyer will feel he is paying for too much blank paper.

The designer considers all of this, and when the manuscript is sent to the typesetter, it goes with specifications for type face, type size, and width of line. The designer also knows how many lines there will be on a page, but the paging will be done later. Later, also, the designer will create the opening pages, and possibly specify type for the jacket, if the jacket artist has no firm feelings about it. When he has finished his job, the designer, with the illustrator, should have created a form for an idea, for a book, that is itself an expression of the book.

Good design, the best design, does not call attention to itself.

Rather, it seems so right it is hardly noticed. It may be stark and plain or fluid and flowery, but in either case what it embellishes is like the design, and the design becomes a part of what the book is saying. If one is immediately aware of an element of design in a book, it is a bad design. Good design may sometimes be startling, it may be eye-catching, and it may be very beautiful; but in every case it only enhances what is already there. Good design, however, does make a book wantable. The best design stands out, not because it is so obviously good design, but because it makes its subject appealing, readable looking, right for the audience that will want the book. It does not oversell itself. It does not make a rather involved book for older boys on automotive engineering look like a simple book anyone can use in building a racer for the local soapbox derby. Neither does it make a fantasy intended for what is somewhat bleakly called "the special reader" look like a novel of everyday humor for the nine- and ten-year-old. Instead, the automotive engineering book will look like a fine book of its kind and will be immediately recognized by all automotive engineering fans. The same is true of the book of fantasy.

Manuscripts arrive back from the typesetter in long galleys. The lines are set in the chosen type and to the measure the designer has indicated. But there are no pages. Enough type for three or even four pages may appear, unbroken, on each long galley. These galleys are read by author, proofreader, illustrator, editor, anyone who wants or needs to read them. Each reader tries to find all the mistakes the typesetter or the manuscript typist had made, in the latter case mistakes that the editor and the author and the copy editor missed. The author may also have other changes he wants to make. And then the galleys are paged—by editor, designer, illustrator, or printer, depending on the book and the practice of the house.

Next comes page proof: galleys the same size generally, but this time with the type broken into pages and perhaps even with page numbers (folios) and running heads (the line with the book or

chapter title that appears at the top of each page in some books). Page proof, too, is read for errors.

At about this time, if not long before, the editor and the production people begin to consider what the final price of the book will be. When the book was accepted, tentative estimates probably indicated that the book could be done at a price that people would pay; but it was too soon to determine the exact price. All the details about the book had to be known first: the size, the length, the cost of illustration, the type face, the kind of printing, the kind of paper, the kind of binding, and so on. When final costs are determined, all of the costs involved in the physical manufacture of the book, including the fee for illustrations if there is one, are added up and divided by the number of books to be printed. This per-unit cost for manufacture plus the author's royalty form the basis for determining the book's price. Over and above this the publisher must allow for discount on his suggested price to bookstores, and there must be some money from each book for advertising, warehousing, salesmen's commissions, and publishing house overhead. When all these have been considered, a price can be set.

Next, as the book progresses, for most books—all those that will print by offset—the publisher will receive repro proof. These are very sharp clear proofs printed on heavy, shiny paper. Repro proofs are read for errors, but at this stage one hopes not to find any. These proofs, if they are all right, are sent to the printer, where they are photographed to make a film for each page, and the films are laid out in a large sheet following a layout given to the printer by the binder. The binder's layout shows where the pages must appear on the plate and on the printed sheet if the folding and binding is to be properly done by the binder's machinery. There may be as few as eight pages on a plate or as many as sixty-four. This is decided both by the size of the printing press and by the binder's equipment that will fold up the sheets and make a book of them.

From the films, laid out just as the pages will appear on the plate,

the printer makes a blueprint. The blueprint also shows the illustrations. They too have been photographed and the resulting film set in place. The blueprint dummy, called a blueprint because it is blue, is folded up just as the finished book will be folded. The pages should be in order, and someone at the publishing house checks to make sure that they are. The pictures are checked to make sure they are properly positioned, and the type is examined for proper, sharp-focus filming. It is possible to correct mistakes at this stage. But it is better not to find any.

The film, if and when all is correct, is exposed onto a plate. The portions that are to take ink will become receptive to ink and the portions that are not to print will not accept ink as a result of the photographing and of subsequent chemical processes. The plate is fastened to a round roller. Below it is a roller of a similar size, covered with a pad of sturdy, smooth rubber. When the rollers revolve, the plate is inked and prints its contents onto the roller below; the roller prints on the paper that runs in a flat sheet beneath it. This is offset, the printing process by which most children's books are now done.

If the book is a book in color, the plates, one for each color to be used, each on its own separate roller, will be put on the press and several hundred sheets will be printed—enough to run the ink up well on the plates and on the rollers—as a proof. The proof will be examined by the printer, publisher, and illustrator, and then, several days or even several weeks later, the plate will be put back on the press again—the same plates or corrected plates—and the actual printing done.

Printed sheets—large flat sheets sometimes six feet or more long and almost as wide—are sent to the binder, who runs them through equipment that folds and cuts them into groups of pages with a fold at the back. These are called signatures, and they may have eight (rarely), sixteen, thirty-two, or sixty-four (rarely) pages in each. The signatures are each sewed down the middle, then all are

sewed together across the back, sewed to end papers, glued across the back, and glued into cases—the hard covers, which have been prepared separately. Jackets are put on the finished book by hand. They have not been printed with the book, unless it is a picture book, but are ready at the same time as the sheets.

Then the book is done. It is too late to change one's mind about anything. The book is ready for the warehouse, for the salesmen, for the promotion and advertising people, and for all the people the author and publisher hope will want to read it.

A book can be printed, put into a warehouse, and stay there forever if no one knows it exists. The job of advertising, publicity, and promotion people is to make people in general aware of books as they are published. Advertising will be placed in those media read by the largest numbers of prospective purchasers. Since children's books are bought largely by school and public librarians, advertising for children's books tends to be placed in magazines especially for librarians. Catalogues, information about authors, special notices about books, general notices about a publisher's ideas on children's books, and other information are sent to prospective purchasers. Publicity people send out review copies to newspapers and magazines and to purchasers who may want to buy the books in large quantities. Promotion people and school and library service representatives have displays of books at meetings and conferences, try to provide special materials when they are requested, and talk with probable purchasers about new books and books about to be published. Most of this is done not to force people into buying books or to try to sell people items they do not want. Rather, it is a way of helping people discover what is available. Purchasers are free to order what they like. There are times, of course, when books are oversold, just as vacuum cleaners, insurance, and garden hoses may be oversold. But in the long run it is better to have too much chance to know about something than no chance at all. The object of most advertising and promotion is the purchase of any given book by those

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people who really want to read it, or who want to have it available for others to read.

For a long time a book, the one perhaps that has just come off the press, belonged only to the author. It was something in his mind, it was ideas he struggled to express, it was a dream he wanted to share. Then somewhere along the way he sold some of his rights in the book to a publisher, who agreed to publish it. The publisher in return for the rights he was granted gave the author an advance against royalty, a promise to bear all the cost of publication, an agreement to pay a given amount of royalty for each copy of the book sold, and a tacit agreement to promote and sell the book as effectively as he could. This is the minimum. If the author was lucky, he also got encouragement, help, and advice when he wanted or needed it, good editing and copy editing and proofreading, good design and illustrations, imaginative promotion and publicity. In short, he got a publisher who cared and who not only looked upon the book as a piece of merchandise or a good prospect for sale, but who shared the author's hopes and dreams for the book as well.

The author's contributions to the book are the essential part of it, of course. But no one can overlook the work of the publisher. Few authors could publish their books alone. Those who try often run into more problems than seems possible. Making a manuscript into a book may look easy to an outsider, but no one involved in publishing ever considers it so.

The publisher also contributes money, and money stands for faith. A publisher has, generally, a given amount of capital to use. He spends, borrows, sells, and plans like all modern businessmen. But the stuff of his enterprise is far more unpredictable than most. No one really knows for sure when a best seller is in the making. And no one really can be sure that any one given book will attract even a small market. Only time, promotion, and the people who buy books can determine this. It is true that because an enormous percentage of all children's books sold go to schools and libraries,

the sales of children's books can be somewhat more accurately predicted than those of adult books. But even so, no one ever really knows. One influential reviewer with a cold or a headache, and even a potentially great book may be off to a poor start. So when a publisher invests money in a book, he is investing a part of his capital in a venture that may or may not succeed. He does this from five to five hundred or more times each year. And each time, whether anyone stops to think about it or not, he is investing his money in an idea, in a person, and in his own ability to convince others that he has published a book they will want.

The book as it finally appears carries the imprint and style of the publisher. The same manuscript submitted to seven different publishers and published by each of them would come out in seven different guises. No two would think quite alike all the way through.

Yet, the publisher is essentially a catalyst. He is the medium that brings the author and the reader together. Without the publisher's contribution, this could not easily happen. Still, the work itself and the reader's reaction to it are the important considerations. The publisher does not matter here. To the author, the publisher can be friend, admirer, adviser, foil, money-lender, teacher, demon, driver, consultant, taskmaster, tool, partner, and pest. To the reader, the publisher can be grasping, money-hungry, enterprising, friend, unpredictable, amazing, and even envied. There is truth in all of it, for publishing is many things and involves many kinds of people. At its best, however, publishing is an effort to find good manuscripts that are in step or even a little ahead of the times; it is making these manuscripts into attractive books; and it is trying to find readers for these books that have reasons for delight in knowing them. Everything a good publisher does is directed toward these ends. And if he does his job well, he may become a success.

Children's Books from Yesterday to Tomorrow

"I hope," says the true believer in a didactic but well-meaning tone, "that you now understand not only the importance of children's books, but the care that goes into their creation."

"A minor art, a minor art," says the heretic. "An innovation; needed maybe; good, even great, maybe; perhaps even literature sometimes. But it has no heritage. No past!"

"No past!" says the true believer. "Listen, don't you like a good story? Doesn't everybody?"

Of course, everyone likes a good story. The cave man coming back from the hunt probably exaggerated the dangers of the chase

in elaborate gestures and rudimentary speech, and the children loved it. The best of these stories were remembered and were passed on, gradually acquiring even grander gestures and more elaborate speech. Surely some of the recurring themes of the most ancient folklore have in them remnants of an oral tradition that began when speech itself was new. The memory of man is very old in the best of the stories he tells. And these are the stories that have belonged anew to every generation of children. What child, even today, will not listen when a story begins, "Long ago and long ago, my dears, in a past when the world was young . . ."

Children's literature began that long ago, although no one called it children's literature then. And adults listened, too. But ancient man, even when speech was new, had more than stories to tell. He had a small, carefully hoarded store of knowledge to pass on; knowledge of the hunt and of spear and arrow making, of the places where fish were plentiful and berries and nuts could be found. These facts were carefully conveyed to children, for the future of the race depended on it.

The survival of man has always depended on what he could do with his mind: his cleverness in the hunt; eventually his genius for cultivating plants and domesticating animals; his capacity to create his own shelter and to warm himself when necessary; his skill as a trader that allowed him to secure goods he would not otherwise have; and his adaptability in creating societies that fit his needs. All of these required from the first an ability to disseminate information and to learn from others. And from the first, the minds of at least some men in each generation have been sharpened to receive, if possible to enlarge upon, and to pass on the inherited learnings enjoyed by his culture.

And so from the first, children have had two kinds of wisdom, two kinds of experience, thrust at them that came not out of the routine of their lives, but out of the heritage of the past and the adult view of the present. There were stories that came out of real

experience, which had been changed and molded into a symbolic experience of truth that lay deeper than wisdom itself. And there were concrete learnings that told how to do everyday things and that explained each child's place in society. Out of both of these, as eventually there came to be writing, there came to be literature.

We do not know what written materials, if any, the children of ancient Babylon, of the Golden Age of Greece, of the two kingdoms of Egypt, or even of ancient Rome enjoyed. Since writing was a hand operation, and one not undertaken lightly, it is probable that there were no special materials written just for children. But children surely enjoyed the stories that were told them: the Epic of Gilgamesh, the poems of Homer, the tales of the gods of Egypt and of Rome. Children of later Rome probably read Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, not as an exercise in a dead language but as a lesson in modern history. They may have read *The Aeneid* and some may have enjoyed the works of Euclid and Ptolemy and Plato and Aristotle. Though none of these were written for children, some of them were certainly deemed a suitable part of a youth's education.

As the Roman Empire faded in the West, and the Christian tradition and purposes gradually supplanted the old pagan ideals, learning changed and the things children heard changed, too. Bible stories and tales of saints and martyrs took the place of the stories of old gods. And the old heroes—Achilles, Jason, Hercules, and the rest—gave way to heroes of a little different stamp: King Arthur, Beowulf, Roland, the Cid, and the knightly but pagan Siegfried. Children of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries and later heard stories told by wandering bards, by the old ones of the family, and in the secret places where the young have always shared their hard-earned forbidden learnings. Most of these children never learned to read.

But for some of them there was more learning. And for a few, remarkably enough, there were books written just for children. All of these books that we know anything about were designed for the exact instruction of young minds by the teachers of the time.

The very first of these in the English tradition seems to have been composed in the early eighth century by Aldhelm, a man who is sometimes spoken of as the father of Anglo-Latin poetry. His book *De Septenario, et De Metris Aenigmatibus ac Pedum Regulis* was a textbook that taught first the marvels of the number seven, considered in his day to have mystical and magical properties, then contained some Latin exercises in the form of a dialogue between teacher and pupil, and finally had some riddles and puzzles in Latin hexameter that tested a pupil's knowledge in many fields, including the scriptures. The latter were not all original with Aldhelm.

At about the same time, a poem, now available in the collection of Anglo-Saxon literature known as the *Exeter Book*, was written in which a father instructs his child in manners, morals, and information of value for the time.

Also in the eighth century, the Venerable Bede, a man who must be looked upon as the outstanding textbook writer of his day, poured out forty-five books for the edification of the six hundred scholars at the school where he taught, St. Paul's at Jarrow. The Venerable Bede wrote in Latin, and he put down, as simply as he could, commentaries on the scriptures and digests of learning from many sources. His *De Natura Rerum* contained all that was known in his day in all the sciences. His *Book of Orthography digested in Alphabetical Order* is a kind of Latin dictionary. These and other books he wrote were used for the teaching of children for centuries.

In the tenth and early eleventh centuries, Aelfric, another great teacher of medieval England, wrote his *Colloquy*. This was an easy-reading book for boys, in Latin. Like a part of Aldhelm's book, it was a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil. The matters discussed were things from the everyday life of the boys: their attitudes toward school; the activities of the shepherds, plowmen, scholars, and others who formed a part of their society. It was not information to be mastered, except for its moral tone, but instead was simple material that left the mind free to absorb the Latin. Aelfric was also responsible for a Latin-English dictionary.

Later, Anselm, who was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1073 to 1109 (approximately), wrote what he called an *Elucidarium*. This was a book of general information for students, almost an encyclopedia. It was so popular and was so widely used that at one time there was even a version in Icelandic.

As medieval life moved from a hard, cold life for most people—and a church-oriented education for those who were educated—into a somewhat more comfortable, broader life for some, parents became more and more anxious to pass on to their children not only the religious values of their society, but the manners and customs that made life civilized to them. They did this through short, rhymed treatises, which were generally memorized by the children they were inflicted upon. These were popular from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. The idea of putting learnings in verse was not new, but the extent of it was. Morals, manners, deportment, even prayers and Latin grammar were cast into verse. *The Whole Duty of a Child* by someone who called himself Symon, for example, completed its task in fifty-one rhymed couplets, 102 lines. It was one of the shortest of its type. These poems and other books of good counsel, including the 1393 *Le Ménagier de Paris*, in which an old husband counsels his wife of fifteen on her duties so she will perform well for his successor, give us a fine picture of the life of the upper classes at that time. But one cannot help but feel that children must have found them dull.

Though didactic works designed to teach what seemed to be important in everyday and spiritual matters undoubtedly were most important through all this time, the story and book that rose above mere teaching and became literature were not altogether missing. *Guy of Warwick*, typical of a number of medieval romances, took place in the "blessed days of Athelstan" and the story may have had its beginnings in the oral tradition long before the Norman Conquest of England. Parts of it were written down before 1113. Although it was a story for adults, young readers probably found it

more fascinating fare than any of the items designed especially for them. The stories of Tom Hickathrift, a strong man, and his friend the Tinker were nursery materials for centuries and were only mildly didactic. Basically they were marvelous adventure stories. And, although the book stemmed from monks, the tales of the *Gesta Romanorum* were full of the magic and adventure children have always enjoyed. The morals tacked on at the end could be ignored then as now. The earliest known manuscript of this book dates from 1326, but it may well be somewhat older; certainly the stories are older. And for children who wanted information with a minimum of ecclesiastical interference, *Properties of Things* by Bartholomaeus Angelicus (De Glanvilla), which was translated from Latin into English in the latter part of the fourteenth century, told the names of everything from the parts of the body to the planets in the heavens and all about them.

Properties of Things continued to be read and used for many years. It was among the books printed by Wynkyn de Worde, the successor to Caxton, the first great English printer. With the coming of printing, of course, books became more plentiful and books for children were among those made more available. Caxton himself printed a small *Elucidarium* and also put down many familiar tales, largely from the oral tradition, that children enjoyed. In 1481 he printed *Reynard the Fox* and in 1484 *The Fables of Aesop*. Such medieval romances as *Guy of Warwick*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Valentine and Orson*, *Robin Hood*, *Havelok the Dane*, and *King Arthur* were among his best sellers. At least one of these, *The Fables of Aesop*, was illustrated with a number of woodcuts.

Instruction was not lost when printing came in, however. Caxton issued a *Book of Courtesye* in 1497, which described the typical day of a well-bred English child. The first Bible for children was printed in Barcelona in 1492. And what may have been the first book set in fully movable type, and certainly was the first set by a woman, was a book for children. By Aelius Donatus, a Roman rhet-

orician who taught Saint Jerome, this work was called *De Octo Partibus Orationis* or simply the *Donatus*. It was a treatise on Latin grammar from which children of the fifteenth century studied, and it was set in type for them by a Dominican nun. Not to be ignored, either, in the early days of printed books, was a work in which a three-year-old sage conveyed elementary information to other children, and in the dialogue in which the book was cast confounded many wise men with his wisdom. This book was called *The Wyse Chyld of Thre Yere Old*.

The books of advice, of manners, of courtesy continued to come. But so did amusing books and really wise books. Some, as before, were tales children had always enjoyed. A few were even printed primarily for children. Most of the best, however, were books written for adults that children adopted. *Don Quixote* by Cervantes was one of them. An early printed book designed just for children was a picture book by Comenius, first published in 1657 and translated into English in 1658. This *Orbis Pictus* contained woodcuts illustrating everyday objects. A book for somewhat older children, and full of misinformation, but still a milestone, was *All the Principal Nations of the World Presented in Their Habits of Fashion of Dressing* by Henry Winstanley. In the 1680's *Tom Thumb* and *Guy of Warwick* and other such stories became available as chapbooks, inexpensive books that the middle class could buy. And in 1697 *Histoires au Contes du temps passé. Avec des Moralités* was published in France. These are the familiar Perrault fairy tales: Little Red Riding Hood, Hop O' My Thumb, Puss in Boots, and so on. They were issued under the name of Perrault's son, perhaps because an elegant courtier of the court of Louis XIV did not feel that the retelling of mere folk tales was in keeping with his station. And whether he actually intended them for children or for the amusement of the court seems to be somewhat in question. Whichever, children enjoyed them then and have ever since.

But, few though the books of real enjoyment were for children,

the day came when even these few were frowned upon. There came a time when from all sides the teachers of manners, morals, and spiritual values descended upon children. First, especially in England and in the newly developing colonies in America, came the Puritans. John Bunyan was among them. He has generally been forgiven his *Pilgrim's Progress* by children (for whom it was not written) because the story is so genuinely absorbing that its heavy-handed lessons can be ignored. But, though John Bunyan did not write his book for children, he was pleased to note their interest in it; and to answer what he felt was an obvious need, in 1696 he wrote *A Book for Boys and Girls or Country Rhymes for Children*. These were lessons in verse that had none of the life and charm of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Puritans did not stop with *Pilgrim's Progress* or even with John Bunyan's less successful venture. Children in the eyes of the Puritans were wicked creatures who needed a constant rein and an endless stream of wise lessons. James Janeway wrote *A Token for Children, Being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children*. This fashionable work was published first in England and then in America, where Cotton Mather added some life histories of New England children. This was joined by such items as John Cotton's work, issued in 1646 in England, and the first book printed for children in America, *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes in either England, drawn from the Breasts of both Testaments for their Souls' Nourishment*. This book was written in question-and-answer form, and children were expected to memorize the answers. Since the Puritans forbade all ballads and nursery stories, the lot of Puritan children seems especially bleak. In America they learned their letters from the New England Primer, first issued probably in 1683, with its alphabet rhymes (In Adams fall/We sinned all), catechism, and verses about death; and then they went on to read countless epics on dying a good death.

This overbalance of spirituality continued well into the eighteenth century. Isaac Watts, for one, published a number of sermon-type books in the early 1700's. But eventually the air began to clear a little. There was an English edition of the *Arabian Nights* in 1712, which venturesome children surely secreted from adults and read. The earliest known version of *Jack the Giant Killer* was a chapbook in 1711. *Mother Goose*, the satirical poems that have become the province of children, and the *Tales of Perrault* in translation were published in England in the early 1700's. Then in 1719 Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe*. He did not write it for children, but children accepted him then and do now. In 1726 Jonathan Swift wrote *Gulliver's Travels*, a book children have relished ever since, failing to see the irony and bitterness that permeated both the author and his creation. It is the story that matters to children; and when they find one they like, they accept it, whatever the author's purpose. Children enjoyed both Defoe and Swift, and they were commended in their enjoyment by one Thomas Breman, who in 1736 announced that even learning should be fun and published *A Description of a Great Variety of Animals and Vegetables . . . especially for the Entertainment of Youth*.

It took a man with a wider viewpoint even than Thomas Breman, however, to see what could actually be done with children's books. That man was John Newbery, and he was not an author but a printer and a bookseller. From his shop, The Bible and Sun, he issued the first book really done just for children's enjoyment, *A Little Pretty Pocketbook*. However, even this made little pretense of getting beyond the didactic, for its fables and poems were replete with morals that were all too obvious. Nevertheless, we can assume, although none of the original edition is now available, that it was more attractive than anything children had had just for themselves before; it had many pictures and was nicely designed. *A Little Pretty Pocketbook* in 1744 was followed by *Tommy Trip* in 1759, written by Newbery himself, the story of a thumb-sized boy who

defeated a giant. And in 1765 Mr. Newbery published *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, which may or may not have been by his friend Oliver Goldsmith. The book itself said it was printed from an original manuscript found in the Vatican, Rome, with pictures by Michelangelo. This book, too, had moral overtones too strong for today's children, but it was a real story, with real characters, plot, suspense, and a satisfying ending. Among the other Newbery contributions to children's delight were many chapbooks with old familiar stories in them: *The History of Thomas Hickathrift*, *The Babes in the Woods*, *Bevis of Southampton*, *Robin Hood*, and many others. His *Mother Goose's Melody* containing fifty familiar Mother Goose rhymes and some of the lyric songs from Shakespeare's plays was widely circulated. And not least, John Newbery began the first children's magazine, *The Lilliputian Magazine*, which contained a miscellany of poems, stories, puzzles, games, and other amusements for children.

Just too late for Newbery, a fine wood engraver, who did some exceptional illustrations for children's books, came along in the late 1700's. This was Thomas Bewick; he was probably the best graphic artist of the eighteenth century. Many Bewick cuts can still be seen, primarily adorning books for adults about children's literature.

But the liveliness that Newbery, Bewick, and others injected into children's books did not last. Before the end of the eighteenth century a group of women writers came to the fore. They believed that every experience of life could be turned into a teaching situation, and they brought with this belief a sentimentality and preciousness that children's books had more or less escaped previously. Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Trimmer, and Maria Edgeworth, to name only a few, initiated a whole new round of preaching books. Their medium was the story, stories stuffed with conversations bristling with facts. What was true in England was equally true on the Continent and in America. But the women were not alone. It was a man, Thomas Day, who created *The History of Sandford and Merton* in three

sections (1783, 1786, and 1789), and with them a model for priggish children that lasted for nearly a hundred years.

Yet 1799 brought *The Swiss Family Robinson* by J. R. Wyss, the tale of a moral family, true, but shipwrecked—an extravagant tale that children still read. There were still books that brought pleasure.

Children were learning to read in those days from hornbooks—small paddles with the Lord's Prayer and the alphabet glued to them and covered over with horn to preserve the writing—and from battledores—a heavy cardboard folded over twice so it opened like a triptych, with alphabets, numerals, and easy reading materials printed inside. The same children were learning arithmetic from *Arithmetic* by Nicholas Pike and from Root's *Introduction to Arithmetic*. In America they were using the first American geography, *American Universal Geography* by Jedediah Morse, Noah Webster's *Blue Back Speller*, *Simplified and Standardized American Spelling*, and also his reader; and by 1800 there was a less pious version of *The New England Primer* available and also *Cooper's History of America abridged for the Use of Children of All Denominations*. American children were also enjoying many English children's books, including those published by John Newbery, by courtesy of Isaiah Thomas, a New England printer, and others who simply pirated English editions and published them without benefit of payment to author or publisher abroad.

After the turn of the century writers of textbooks and books of information decided they must make their products more childlike. The aim was admirable, although the results did not meet our standards. Mr. Stops presented *Punctuation Personified*, nonsense about punctuation and parts of speech. And in 1816 and 1819 rhymes were published designed to help children learn the multiplication tables. In 1827 Samuel Goodrich issued the first of his Peter Parley books, *Tales of Peter Parley About America*. This became a series of books about various subjects from a purely American viewpoint. In 1834 Jacob Abbott wrote *Little Rollo*, the first of a series of travel books. Rollo was quite a normal boy at first, but soon became

a prig full of too much information. The famous *McGuffey Eclectic Readers* came into being in 1834, bringing children a wide selection of stories and verse, more difficult than modern readers, but far more interesting than anything of the sort done before.

Yet, though the textbooks and the deliberately informative books were trying to move in more child-oriented directions, the ladies of the eighteenth century pressed on into the nineteenth with their stilted, didactic stories for leisure reading. Biographies of pious children who experienced premature deaths were still popular subjects. Mary Pilkington with her *Biography for Girls; or Moral and Instructive Examples for the Female Sex* is a good example of what these ladies as a whole were doing; the book was very like the title. Martha Sherwood wrote 350 moralizing books and tracts. And Maria Edgeworth went on and on, though she did include some excitement in her stories in spite of her determination to educate. One of the few still remembered products of these times is the poem "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," which appeared in 1804 in *Original Poems for Infant Minds* by Ann and Jane Taylor. It is the only memorable note in a volume devoted to a contemplation of duty, justice, and death.

In fact, children's books were so bad early in the nineteenth century that Charles Lamb first complained about the wearying numbers of dreary books for children and then set out to do something about it. He and his sister Mary wrote *Tales from Shakespeare*, published in 1806, a true piece of literature written for children. This was followed by *The Adventures of Ulysses* in 1808, an equally fine work. Children were also treated to several new editions of Mother Goose rhymes in America at about this time. And in 1807 they were indulged with a bit of nonsense verse, illustrated with bright pictures, *The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast*. In 1822 children were given *A Visit from St. Nicholas* by Clement Moore. Though none of the latter had the depth and wisdom of true literature, they were a welcome change of pace.

At the same time children were still appropriating adult books for

themselves. It did not take long for them to discover *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* from Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, published in 1819. Nor did they overlook *The Last of the Mohicans* in 1826 or any of the James Fenimore Cooper books that followed. And another book of a very different nature soon became a standard part of the children's list of treasures. In 1812 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm had published in Germany *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, a serious collection of German folklore, intended to preserve stories in the oral tradition likely to be forgotten if they were not written down. These were translated and published in England in the mid-1820's and made their way to America a short time later. Children adopted them at once.

Children's literature came up to the middle of the nineteenth century beginning to look very healthy indeed. Not only were there the books that have been mentioned, but there were some new writers who came to the fore late in the period. *The Three Bears* appeared in 1831 in a somewhat different form from the one we now know, and in verse, but *The Three Bears*, nevertheless. In 1836 Captain Frederick Marryat published *Mr. Midshipman Easy* and in 1844 *Masterman Ready* appeared. These were stories rich with adventure, tragedy, and battle. If they seem overly moral in tone to us today, it is because they belong to another era. But published as they were for children, they were an innovation in their day because they really were good stories. Then in 1846 *Wonderful Stories for Children* translated from the Danish of Hans Christian Andersen by Mary Howitt became available for English-reading children. A true storyteller for children, Andersen was soon read everywhere. Eighteen forty-six was a rich year, for it also saw the publication of the first of Edward Lear's nonsense poems. Add to these beginnings of really good books for children the two fine children's magazines begun in America in 1827, *The Juvenile Miscellany* and *The Youth's Companion*, and one feels children were doing quite well. The first of the magazines was not long-lived, but the second lasted

over a century. Although it was a part of the Sunday School Movement, it published outstanding authors and some material of true literary quality.

The stage was set for a flowering. And it came. Consider the last half of the nineteenth century: John Ruskin, *The King of the Golden River* (1851); Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Wonderbook for Boys and Girls* (1852), *Tanglewood Tales* (1853); Charles Kingsley, *The Heroes* (1856), and the first modern fantasy, *The Water Babies* (1863); Mary Mapes Dodge, *Hans Brinker; or the Silver Skates* (1865); Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), *Through the Looking Glass* (1871); Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (1867), and many others to follow; Charles Dickens, *The Magic Fishbone* (1868); Thomas Bailey Aldrich, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869); George McDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871); Mark Twain, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876); Carlo Lorenzini (Collodi), *Pinocchio* (1880); Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus, His Songs and Sayings* (1881); Louise de la Ramée, *A Dog of Flanders* (1872), *The Nürnberg Stove* (1882); Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (1883), and many others to follow; Johanna Spyri, *Heidi* (1884), and others to follow; Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School Days* (1885); Howard Pyle, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (1883), and others to follow, which he both wrote and illustrated; Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886), *Sara Crewe* (1888), *The Secret Garden* (1910); Andrew Lang, *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889), with the Red, Green, and Yellow to follow; Joseph Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales* (1892), *Celtic Fairy Tales* (1893), and *Indian Fairy Tales* (1894); Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book* (1894). And these are only a few. These authors and titles may not all be familiar to today's children, but a large part of them are familiar to many parents, and certainly they are still available, some in many editions. Some may seem dated in attitude today. Some may have that seemingly omnipresent quality in children's books, a tendency to moral-

ize. But all were real stories, books with action, with characters that lived and experiences that seemed believable and acceptable to children in the context in which they were presented.

At the same time some real poetry for children was making an entrance. Longfellow had done a few poems for children. Browning did *The Pied Piper*. Christina Rossetti in England wrote gentle verse for children and also some nonsense poems. Eugene Field in America published *Poems of Childhood* in 1896, a bit after James Whitcomb Riley's *Rhymes of Childhood* in 1891. And of course, there was *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Not to be outdone by books, magazines for children also flourished. The first true magazine for children in England came in 1852 and was called *The Charm*. In 1868 Mrs. Gatty and Mrs. Ewing, two lady authors, started *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, which became popular for a time on both sides of the sea. Then in 1873 came *St. Nicholas Magazine*, edited in its great years by Mary Mapes Dodge. On its pages appeared stories and articles by the great of the day: Alcott, Stevenson, Kingsley, Burnett, Lucretia Hale, Laura E. Richards, and many others; in addition, there were letters from children who would one day be the writers of the next generation.

These were the years when books of fairy tales, books of humor, school stories, fantasy, great adventure tales, stories of the past, and every sort of book that children enjoy became important. And not only children, but adults as well, recognized this. Long reviews of children's books were carried from time to time in newspapers and in the most important literary magazines. These reviews were written by knowing critics who recognized the value of what they were reading and knew good literature, whether for children or adults, when they saw it.

Yet even in this golden time, and for authors and critics alike, the moral was not forgotten. It was in the books, it was mentioned in reviews, and it was considered essential. For every great writer who

knew how to let a story grow out of truth and reveal something beyond temporary moral values, there were ten authors who relied on sentimentality and good advice to attract purchasers.

Among those who wrote such books were many who were almost great. Anna Sewall's *Black Beauty* is still read, but most readers today would consider it far overdrawn. Laura E. Richards wrote *Captain January* and other books that are still available, if not read. And Juliana Horatia Ewing wrote some fine material and also some sermons in storied prose. Children read them and enjoyed them because they were so much a part of their day that they did not notice that the sentiment and the dictums were too strong. Today we see it.

It was in a very different kind of book, a book of far less quality, that the Victorian spirit revealed itself most truly, however. The sentimental piety of the time showed itself best in the day's endless series books: Martha Finley's *Elsie Dinsmore*, Harriet Lathrop's *Five Little Peppers*, and Rebecca Clarke's *Dotty Dimple* and *Little Prudy*, and many more. All are synonyms today for a simplistic outlook and a naïveté that few can even imagine accepting. For the boys there were the Horatio Alger books, the street-waif-to-banker epics that made the impossible seem right next door. There were more than a hundred of these, beginning with *Ragged Dick* in 1867. Oliver Optic (William Adams) wrote a magazine and books full of adventure, excitement, geography, stilted speeches, and lectures on the evils of drinking and gambling. Included among these were the *Boat Club* series, the *Army and Navy* series, and the *Starry Flag* series.

Of an entirely different nature—frowned upon then, but looked at with tolerant amusement today—were the dime novels. These began in 1860 and were primarily for boys from ten to sixteen years old. The first of what grew to be more than eight hundred titles was *Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*. Among the better known of these dime novels were those by William S. Patten about

Frank Merriwell. These books had no purpose but to amuse. They were the television serials and situation comedies of their day.

Nonfiction was not forgotten either in this period, although what was produced seems of lesser importance to us today. Horace Scudder's books about the Bodley family took readers to many countries to view strange places and other customs. Thomas Higginson's *A Young Folk's History of the United States* in 1875 marked a new high in the writing of history for American children. And Robert Ballantyne began a series of books in 1856 that eventually became eighty books of exciting stories based on news events in the world. Children, most people still felt, needed their facts padded with a little fiction.

When the new century came, there was little change at first. E. Nesbit wrote *The Treasure Seekers* and others of her still-read books of everyday adventure and fantasy commencing primarily in the English countryside. J. M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan* was produced in 1904, and books about Peter Pan and Wendy followed some years later. Selma Lagerlöf of Sweden gave the world information about her country in a fantasy, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, in 1907. And Kenneth Grahame brought a new high to animal fantasy with *The Wind in the Willows* in 1908. Kipling's *Just So Stories* were published in 1912. Jack London's *Call of the Wild* in 1913. And then came a war and a new world.

The 1920's saw a great burgeoning of children's books. Children's editors became fixtures in several publishing houses in the United States. The Newbery Award, first given in 1922, encouraged exploration into what good children's books could be. In 1919 twelve million children's books were sold. By 1925 this number had more than doubled. Part of this may have been the result of Children's Book Week, a celebration for schools and libraries and children's organizations begun in 1919 by Franklin K. Mathews, Chief Boy Scout Librarian, and Frederic G. Melcher, the head of the Bowker Company, who was later the donor of the Newbery medal.

Good books of fiction began to come quickly then in titles too numerous to mention. They reached out in all directions from the fantasy of *Winnie the Pooh* (England in 1926) to the realism of Doris Gates' *Blue Willow*, the story of a migrant girl, in 1940, and the many books of Lois Lenski in the 1940's and 1950's that showed what it was like to live in regional America. There were the horse stories of Marguerite Henry and the cowboy books of Will James; the humor of Robert McCloskey and Beverly Cleary and others, and the racial realism of Jerrold Beim in *Two Is a Team*, Dorothy Sterling in *Mary Jane*, John Neufeld in *Edgar Allan*, and Kristin Hunter in *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*. History appeared in *Caddie Woodlawn*, in *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years*, in the "Little House" books of Laura Ingalls Wilder and the romantic epics of Rosemary Sutcliff. Some city stories and a great many suburban and country stories geared to the feel of the times could be found.

Poetry for children continued. Walter de la Mare's *Songs for Childhood* was published in 1902 and *Peacock Pie* in 1913. But later there came A. A. Milne, Rachel Field, Dorothy Aldis, Aileen Fisher, and many more to add to the growing wealth of poetry that really was poetry and yet could be enjoyed by the very young.

Between 1900 and 1920 there were many books of folktales. Padraic Colum, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Parker Fillmore, Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen, Ellen Babbitt, and others added to what the Grimm Brothers, Andrew Lang, Joseph Jacobs, and others had done before. After 1920, folktales from every land and every culture began to appear, including such books as *Tales from Silver Lands*, stories from South America.

It was between the wars that single folktales illustrated as picture books began to become really important and to have wide distribution. *The Five Chinese Brothers* illustrated by Kurt Wiese is a good example. Later Marcia Brown did *Stone Soup* in 1947, *Cinderella* in 1954, and *Once a Mouse* in 1961.

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Picture books as a whole came into their own in the period after the First World War. Beatrix Potter's books were done long before, of course. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* was published by Warne in England in 1902, and others followed from her and from a few others. But it was in the 1920's that the picture books really developed into an important part of publishing for children. Wanda Gag with her *Millions of Cats* in 1928 is an example of a book that has never ceased to be popular since the time of its publication. Dr. Seuss (*And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*), Adrienne Adams, Edward Ardizzone, Ludwig Bemelmans, Jean de Brunhoff, Barbara Cooney, Ingri and Parin D'Aulaire, James Daugherty, Beni Montresor, Ezra Jack Keats, Maurice Sendak, John Langstaff, Roger Duvoisin, Ed Emberley, Uri Shulevitz, and Ellen Raskin are only a few of the artists who were and still are creating picture books of note. These books are of every variety, from books nearly as small as those of Beatrix Potter to large books suited to perusal on the floor on a rainy afternoon. Some are black and white and some are rich in color. But more important than the color or lack of it is the content, which ranges from fairy tales to modern fantasy like *Mike Mulligan*, the story of a steam shovel, and to the biographies of the D'Aulaires and the realism of *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* by Evaline Ness.

Yet all of this had a precedent. There had been fiction, there had been picture books, though not in such quantity. There had also been nonfiction; there had always been informational books. But in earlier years nonfiction had tended to indoctrinate or to present ideas that the writer felt every child needed to believe or accept. And most of the facts were encased in a story in one way or another. But now books began to come that asked only to inform, to present information that a child might actually want to have, but that he might, in limited ways at least, accept or reject. The early days of the century had produced the usual fiction-covered information: Joseph Altsheler wrote historical fiction; Lucy Fitch Perkins

wrote about stereotyped twins in various geographical and historical situations; and Laura E. Richards turned from stories to historical fiction. These were much like many of the books that had been done before. But E. Boyd Smith's illustrated information books *The Farm Book* and *The Chicken World* in 1910 were a departure. Much more so was Hendrik Van Loon's *The Story of Mankind* in 1921, which won the first Newbery Award. In the 1930's *The Earth for Sam* by W. Maxwell Reed, *Along the Hill* by Carroll Lane Fenton, the books about oil, wheels, food, clothing, etc., by Maud and Miska Petersham, and a number of other fine works began what in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's became a flood of informational books. Some were good, some were not. Endless series of books, particularly biography, often began well and then deteriorated as subjects became more and more remote and patterns became more and more standardized. Yet nonfiction had at last come into its own.

And so we come to today, a time when in the United States and in other countries as well, there are more children's books being published than at any time in the entire history of mankind. We have come a long way from the *Colloquy* of Aelfric, the advice of the thirteenth century, the moralizing of *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes*, and even some of the less-than-masterpieces of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We have come a long way in quantity and in some ways in quality.

Children's books today can be literature, both fiction and nonfiction. The truths of the human situation can be expressed in a book for children in writing that is succinct and genuine, in ideas that are fresh and clear, in packages of experience that are rich and honest, in situations that present truth but do not moralize. They can and they do, but not always.

Though there is more freedom today than there ever has been, in many ways the difficulties of the past have not been wholly left behind. Some adults have never been able to regard children's books simply as a means of conveying information and crystallizing a view

of life for readers to examine and accept or reject. Rather, when they think of children's books, they either look for a pacifier, a time-taker that will keep a breathless reader moving from page to page to a conclusion that does no more than end a never-ending series of events, or they look for something that will indoctrinate rather than inform or convey an experience or idea. Many of these adults buy children's books, and some write them.

Consequently there are more series books than ever before. What Oliver Optic, Elsie Dinsmore, and the dime novel were to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, Judy Bolton, the Bobbsey Twins, and their endless counterparts are to today. And few parents complain about them. The books keep the children occupied with something besides TV.

Worse, many books of nonfiction are not creative books that allow the reader to think and move ahead in his own way but are instead books of very little mind. They concern themselves with a dull round of facts, or they preach a preconceived viewpoint so strongly that there is no room for any other thoughts. Biographies dress up heroes and heroines to make them what the author thinks they should be in front of children instead of what they really were. Science books prompt the reader to engage in small experiments that become an end in themselves and lead nowhere. Books about children in other countries show a little of a strange pattern of life, but nothing of why it is that people live as they do and what their thinking and their way of life may mean for the future. Books of history and geography compartmentalize episodes and places and leave the reader with no knowledge of how events around the world relate to each other, even in a day when the daily newspaper makes this clear.

In fiction, some adults are even more insidious. They create bland nothings designed to make a pallid existence of television and compliance to accepted standards look appealing. They "tell it like it is" and give children and young people books on alcohol, unwed

motherhood, narcotics, and race in terms intended to drive home the currently acceptable viewpoint, to make young people accept an idea without asking why. Stereotyped characters with stereotyped answers sound real only because they are immediate, and not because they live. Other books glorify the joys of youth to make the young believe they have both wisdom and knowledge—an in-born heritage, perhaps, that comes from a birth that is neither a sleep nor a forgetting—yet at the same time the same books contrive to make their readers accept the conventions the adults themselves have accepted.

In other words, some adults today are as guilty of preaching at children, of ignoring the individuality of the young, and of trying to justify themselves in children's eyes as any previous generation has been. This is not easy to see because today's books sound so reasonable; they are a part of today and they sound right. But in thirty years or forty years, and sometimes in a mere five or ten years, such books will sound as dated as anything written a century ago.

Didacticism and a dedication to a short-range view may never be wholly eliminated. In fact, to some extent we cannot eliminate it at all and should not want to do so. The past and present cannot be eliminated from the future, and today and today's ideas must appear in today's books so that we can reach tomorrow. The aim should not be to eliminate today and today's ideas from what is passed on, but to pass on the best of what today is, the spirit that rises above today's failures and sees what can be. And these ideas should be passed on not in an atmosphere of pressure to accept them, but in a manner that allows the reader to take what he needs and leave the rest to question when he wishes and seek other answers when he chooses.

Though adults may not all have changed as much as they need to change in their approach to children's books, this is a time of change, and change does make it possible for new attitudes to arise. There are new themes today. Though the treatment of realis-

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tic themes may not be as detached or as truly honest as one might wish, situations can at least be presented that have never been presented before. Almost no theme is unacceptable in a children's book today if it is truly written within a child's understanding. What is most often lacking is not breadth of subject, but breadth of viewpoint.

A lack of understanding of what children's books can be is not the only problem facing children's books today, however. Prophets predict their total demise. Television has stimulated some children to read, but others it has entranced completely into a pseudo-life. Audio-visuals of all kinds present facts, present daily events, planned lessons, and encapsulated experiences in some cases better than books. These, some say, are the mark of the future. And it may be that although, except for the very best, audio-visuals do not permit the mind-to-mind exploration a good book allows, in a society where facts and the concrete seem to matter more than a transcendent spirit, communication between minds may not appear essential. Furthermore, children's books today must speak to a generation that has always known a proliferation of the audio-visual, that seems to demand sound and action in every happening. It is a generation which, when it seeks itself, seems to find only a crowd. A book takes quiet and aloneness. Will books then die?

Society does not ask for books that demand soul searching, deep thought, and an individual response by the reader. Instead society asks for books that can be used with children, that will take children one step beyond the mass media into the spirit of ideas, but that do not go too far. Thinking to many people is a dangerous occupation. And they are not wrong. Even good thinking can lead in unexpected directions. The freedom to think without bounds can lead to anarchy unless the self-discipline necessary to wield such freedom is learned. But it is not that freedom to think must be denied, but rather that self-discipline must be achieved. For it is the basis both of learning and of democratic government. It can be

learned best by examining the workings of a free but well-disciplined mind. A teacher, a parent, a group leader, or a book can be this example. And slowly, in books of both fiction and nonfiction, we are seeing this exhibited. The history books of Genevieve Foster exhibit a fine perception of the interplay of events in a given time without assuming too much or covering more area than a reader can comprehend. A book like *Big Tiger and Christian* shows adventure in the highest sense and a discipline of character and action that makes the adventure seem real. These and many newer books like them are books that evade the pressures of stereotyped thinking and yet maintain an individual discipline, that demonstrate both freedom and restraint. It can be hoped that society, or children at least, will discover their value. If so, books will not die.

In the end books may not die, too, because the many good books that there are prove too helpful to children as they try to find their way as individuals in an increasingly complex and patterned society. We are in a time of transition—socially, culturally, and morally as well as literarily. Society seems to many young people to be strangled in its own mistakes, so much so that only rejection of what has been can produce what should be. At the same time, the problems of the past call for solutions that today's children must produce. These future adults will have the power to eliminate the world, but they will not be able to eliminate it and begin again. So if they are to effect reform without total disaster, they must begin where things are today. Who will help them?

The mass media will not help. They are too often tied to the unimportant. Textbooks and traditional learning materials are too tied to method to help, even when methods change. Only wise individuals with new ideas can help, and they are most likely to be heard through art forms. Music is one avenue; good books are another. Because they make demands of the mind, they can help minds gather the resources needed to cope with difficult issues. They can parade, at whatever pace the reader chooses, all of the

successes and the failures of the past in small details or in large, important sequences. At the same time they can provide time away from the ever-present noise of civilization and give readers a quiet time to think.

The books that provide such help for tomorrow must themselves be the products of new thinking. Authors must reach out not only for new subjects, but for new ways of approaching those subjects. How can new things be said in new ways? How can new responses be stimulated in children who have had too much, in children who have traveled themselves to half the world by the time they are ten or twelve and to the moon and Mars on television? How do you begin a book that will seem novel and important to children who have known only slums and the worst life has to offer? How can you approach a child whose immediate neighborhood has insulated him against the different? Authors may someday leave the dissemination of hard-core facts to the audio-visuals; but how will they go beyond, how will authors demonstrate where facts imbedded in wisdom can lead? How can authors create books that will make children yearn for wisdom that lies beyond facts, without preaching, without pouring either the facts or the children into a precast mold?

Possibly because these are times of change, and because children's books are being published in great numbers, because the possibilities for publication are good, the answers will be found. There are many reasons why this is so. First of all, new kinds of books have always been written; some minds have always moved ahead of the flock. And in a time of rapid change this is likely to be more true. The minds of authors can become as restless as the minds of children. The pressure to say and to express can become uncontrollable. In the second place, although schools often seem to be the conveyors of the stereotyped, modern instruction allows much more individual initiative than any earlier instruction, and books of all kinds on every subject are being made available to children at least in the bet-

ter schools. Children will find the new books. In the third place, increased knowledge always brings unforeseen results, and some of these results must be new ways of handling that knowledge and passing it along. Books are an old form of knowledge dissemination, and stories, as we have seen, are even older, but they are still useful and in wise hands can change and maintain their ability to be many things to many people.

The changes that come will come because there are people who cannot rest with good enough, whose restless minds demand more. They will come because new readers—readers from social, intellectual, and cultural levels that have not turned readily to books before—will demand new things. They will come because books that blend too much with the mass media will eventually be lost—those who respond to mass culture will choose easier entertainment than books—and books will survive for those people and those occasions that nothing else will serve. Change will come for those who want or need individualization.

The patterns these changes will take will vary with the influences that create them. As educators struggle to educate children adequately—since so much more is known each year and so much more must be taught—and so many more children of varying backgrounds and capacities must be reared to useful levels—there may be more books that lie on the borderline between textbooks and trade books. They will, like trade books, be books children can use individually; but they will be structured like textbooks, designed to teach facts and require specific results. There will be programmed learning books of wide varieties. There will be books accompanied by or made to accompany filmstrips, movies, and records to a far larger degree than now. They will be used by a child alone to teach himself in areas where a filmstrip or other audio-visual medium alone, or a book alone, would not suffice. There may be many brief books, almost pamphlets, on endless subjects that can be fed to children with momentary special interests or momentary needs in areas

of study. There may be books designed to go beyond facts that will teach children awareness of the physical world, of the nature of man's mind and emotions, and of the creative functions of the mind in trained steps, that teach but do not necessarily create experiences. Such books will be pamphlets, paperbacks, microfilm, taped cassettes, anything that can carry pictures and words.

But these will not be true children's books—the books of literature that do more than merely serve educational needs, that tell more than how to do it. These books will be the teaching books, the books that are designed to carry on the body of knowledge that has come to us and been developed by us, the way of the hunt and of food and shelter and of placating current gods. They represent all that early children's books had to offer, except the old tales and the stories children heard orally. But they will not be all.

There may also continue to be a middle ground—groups of books that serve to entertain children through shallow but exciting stories, and books that cover up their wearying didacticism with pallid characters and forced plots. Though these may decline in number, for other media may largely take their place, they may never wholly disappear because too many adults will continue to approve of them. The changes in them will merely reflect the superficial changes in society.

As for true literature, there will be deep changes. What the changes will be depends on the people who write the books, the people who publish books, the people who buy books, and most of all on the children for whom they are written. Children are no longer reckoned to be small vessels crying to be filled with the word of truth, but rational individuals who can think for themselves. Consequently, books for them can assume that they have powers of discernment, the amount depending on their age, and can present experiences as opportunities for the exercise of discernment, within the limits of their years and lives.

To meet the "new child" the old taboos are almost gone, and the

old forms of literature may also go. What will replace the familiar novel form, the kinds of poetry we know, the biography, and other forms of nonfiction? No one can say. But a new spirit creates a new vessel to hold itself, and so it will be with the new social, cultural, and spiritual patterns that will come from our present chaos. Perhaps there will be a new kind of fantasy—fantasy that leaves the world behind for spiritual and psychological adventure, that explores beyond any walls of the present. If so, what milieu will make such a journey possible, what new metaphors will enclose such searchings? The new poetry may invent wholly new conventions that fit new probings into twenty-first-century emotions and longings. There may be books that allow the reader to create episodes himself, that make the book even more a dialogue between two minds than it is and that make the results for each reader even more personal and individual. There may be books of biography that draw on many authentic sources, cementing words of the biographee and eyewitness words about him into a harmonious whole. There may be books that venture into the abstract in ways that make it possible for children, who normally prefer the concrete, to hold the bodiless in their minds almost as readily as the fully fleshed. There may be books that use more than words as symbols of meaning. As we let our minds grow used to the vastness of space and the mysteries of the atom, as children grow up in a world where one must admit the reality of the unseen if for no other reason than the fact that science now believes all matter may be no more than pulses and waves of energy, books will have to penetrate the mood and the implications of such knowledge. And they must do it for children, for it is children who must shape their lives by these understandings.

Yet good books, fine books, will continue to tell good stories; they will continue to present facts in orderly, sensible ways; and poetry will stir the emotions still with a fresh look at the beauty of the world and the surprises of the everyday. Forms may change, new

forms may come, and the context in which books exist, the areas of accepted understandings and regions for explorations, may change; but basic human needs will not change. Children will always need stories to expand their spirits, and information to expand their grasp.

Picture books will also remain, though some of what they do now may be further taken over by other visual media. For those who want to give their children a chance to see fine art in a form the child can really study and enjoy, the well-done picture book will always supply one answer. And for children who want to hear, or see, a story over and over again at their own pace, a book is the best medium. Pictures will follow the trends of art—and may even become more realistic than they have been, as art seems to become more and more super-real. Artists should and will have greater and greater freedom to do what they want to do, but within the limits of the price of printing. It is to be hoped that the future will bring some cheaper means of reproducing full-color drawings or paintings so that artists may work in any way they wish and not have to worry about cost and quality of reproduction. In the immediate future there will be many picture books from abroad as long as copyright regulations make it impossible to print American books abroad and price forbids the printing here of all but the most likely to succeed. Good books from abroad will, of course, always be welcome, whatever the circumstances.

Books for older children will also come from abroad in increasing numbers. The exchange of books between countries will help children of one land picture children of another with more accuracy than books merely written about another people. But in the end, such exchanges may also iron away some cultural differences, even some of the more attractive ones. Already we are becoming more alike everywhere, and as co-production ventures increase and books are made to fit the needs of publishers in many countries, the books that come from abroad may in the end represent no one. But per-

haps these are but the forerunners of a united world. And this too could be for the good.

Whatever the subject matter of the future, whatever the form and the format, whatever the source of books, they will still be read curled up in a chair, by flashlight—or tensor light—under the covers in bed at night, in tree houses, on airplanes and buses, in cars, and in whatever new vehicles are invented, in boats drifting on a summer lake, in libraries (or media centers), in classrooms, and in private, secret places everywhere.

Yet some of the agencies that dispense them may put them to new uses. Schools may use books instead of texts for diagnostic purposes: determining a child's true reading ability, establishing his interests, measuring his creativity, and gauging his grasp of a subject. If this happens, educators may have developed a fine tool; but they will have to use their tool wisely if children are not to be frightened away from books by it. Creative teachers in areas where children have few resources in their homes may create a culture for each child with books he can enjoy. And when education is reduced, as someday it may be, to awakening a desire for learning in each child and then helping him to learn those things that will best benefit him as an individual and society as a whole, then books in the school will be read entirely for pleasure, for learning and exercising that learning in creative ways are surely among the greatest pleasures life can give.

Those who work with disturbed children and retarded children are already finding books a help. Books do not require complicated machinery to operate or expensive equipment that only a few can afford. Nor are they treatments that only the skilled can administer. A picture book will open for any child who cares to move the cover; and when more becomes known about how images and ideas affect the minds of such children, books can possibly be selected that will bring them new ties to the experiences of others.

Books will still be used at home and for all sorts of recreational

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purposes. These in the future will probably be largely paperbacks, for paperbacks are most suitable to the fast, mobile lives children already lead and surely will continue to have.

Publishers, too, will continue to exist and will continue to publish children's books in the hope that they will be bought. Publishers will operate in two ways as they have in the past: they will follow mass trends and publish what is needed to acquaint each generation with itself; and they will try to see a little ahead and venture into the publishing of those books that may represent the beginning of tomorrow's wisdom. It is likely that if the book continues to fill even a part of its traditional role of image maker, idea dispenser, and experience generator, there will be more rather than fewer books. The growth in the number of books published each year has been slow and gradual until fairly recently. Only in the last twenty years has the number of good children's books each year been beyond the capacity of a skilled professional children's librarian to read herself *in toto*. But only in the last twenty or twenty-five years has our environment changed almost daily. In the centuries when women's dress styles changed little in the course of one woman's lifetime, when new words were added to the language only rarely, when new inventions were marveled at for fifty years, a few books could do all that was needed. Now many books are needed to contain all the new things that must be explained or understood, even given the aid of other media. And it is possible that if a day comes when pills taken at bedtime teach a language before morning, just as many books will be needed—if for no other reason than to help learners exercise their new language skills.

Publishing houses will continue to publish authors who can write books that are needed for immediate ends and to publish authors whose books reach out into areas where needs have not yet been determined. These will include books that stretch the capacity of the intellect as well as that of the imagination. There may be books that use subliminal suggestion to reach hidden capacities of the brain as

well as books that make one imagine what it would be like to be the remnant of a once flourishing civilization on a small planet just the right distance for life from a yellow sun. Such publishing will still be a gamble but there will always be those who have that courage.

Publishers may have advanced technology to help them in the future. Better printing, better paper, better binding methods may help to make books more attractive, more durable when necessary, and maybe even less expensive. Certainly new machinery is being created and devised to help in this, but slowly; for the publishing and printing of books are not among the most lucrative of businesses, and there is less capital to invest in experiment here than in many other enterprises. Yet work must be done if books are to remain a real part of the world as it progresses. Books need to be more widely available and less expensive. Paperbacks help, but what has been done is not enough. Maybe someday it will be possible to go into a small store, select a desired book from a sample or a précis or a catalog, then place some money in a machine, pull the proper levers, and have the book reproduced in the machine electronically from a distant source—the publisher's repository machine. The money paid would include royalties to author and fee to publisher. The book might never have been printed at all, simply stored in some elaborate central computer in special ways that would give the printed version form, format, and design, even pictures, as well as words. It might even be possible to get one's choice of binding from the bookstore's machine. Perhaps each publisher will have his own "book bank," and bookstores will have receiving machines for all publishers. It's possible.

All things are possible. For children will always want to know and to think and to be entertained. Children's books that started as an oral tradition perpetuating and accenting deep, root truths of human experience in succinct and often harsh tales were capsule statements of countless experiences and strong wisdom, and

books will continue to be so. Books that started as the need of one generation to pass on to the next generation the code of learning and moral strictures that had shaped the past will also continue to find counterparts, though the results may be quite different. We no longer believe that our society is the best of all societies. We believe that some of the chords that bind our society together are good and worth keeping and some are not so good. But we disagree among ourselves as to which belong in each category. So books present many ideas, and the young must choose. The need today is to present what is to be said with humility and open-mindedness, not with an air of finality. It is finality that makes prigs of books and rebels of readers.

The future for children's books then is both certain and uncertain. And it is the uncertainty that is the joy of those who look for great things to come. For author, for editor, for publisher, for book specialists of any sort, and for children who come to love books, there is nothing quite so exciting, quite so promising, as the not-yet-touched book. It is the unfulfilled hope that keeps us moving always on.

Reading a Children's Book

If this were a book to be read by children, and if children could always read as they chose, this short last chapter would be unnecessary. Children read either because they have to read or because they want to read. If they have to and hate it, they drudge through a book and remember only what they have to remember for as long as they have to remember it. If they have to read and find themselves enjoying it, they may even remember one or two things about a book. If they want to read, they will drown themselves in books and may even emerge with new experiences firmly imbedded in their minds.

Children are sensible in the way they read, when they read by

choice. They read for the sheer delight of laughing over Henry's ridiculous plights, crying over Beth's untimely death, thrilling over Taran's final victory, shivering at the audacity of Harriet, reveling in the made-up mysteries of the Egypt Game, or purring in delight at the obvious superiority over adults of Big Tiger and Christian. Or they read for information. They want to know about something, and they read to find out.

At least many children read this way if left alone. If they are not badgered with questions like: How did Mary like Jim the newsboy? Did John count to ten or twenty his first day in school? Was the milkman kind to the kitten than came aboard his truck? How many trees did you see in the picture on page four? Worse still are the occasions when they are told in advance what to look for in a book and what kinds of questions will be asked about it. Of course, teachers and librarians need to know if children can read and how much they take from their reading. But the best reading is very personal. It is the child's feeling for the book, his decision of what is important in the book that matters. Most questions about a book, any book of literature, reflect the reactions of the writer of the questions and not of any other reader to that book. Children know such questions are stupid. But many adults seem not to.

Adults are quite different in their reading. The adult world is made up of nonreaders, newspaper readers, newspaper-and-magazine readers, and newspaper-magazine-and-book readers. The last is the smallest group. Among those who read books, there are several categories: there are those who read only best sellers because they make good conversation plugs; there are those who don't read best-sellers but do read the current avant-garde specialties because they are, or they need to be thought, sophisticated; there are those who read sensational books because their lives are somewhat less than sensational; there are those who read romantic books, possibly because their lives are less than romantic; there are those who read informational books and nonfiction, some to be informed and some to

appear informed; there are those who pursue special interests, either temporary or permanent; and there are those who read all kinds of things because they enjoy all kinds of things. In addition there are a few adult readers of children's books. And it may be that the number of these is increasing.

There are adults who must read children's books. They include children's librarians, teachers of children's literature, students of children's literature, some school teachers, editors and other people who work in publishing houses with children's books, authors of children's books, illustrators of children's books, parents who for one reason or another find themselves doing it—most often picture books—aloud. And then there are some very bright people who have discovered on their own that children's books have something to offer, who read them for pleasure.

Most of the adults who read children's books, either because they must or for pleasure, enjoy them. (With the possible exception of the parent who groans as he begins the hundredth reading of *Scrambled Eggs Super*.) They find children's fiction well written, alive with interesting characters, and embodying ideas that are as challenging to an adult as to a child. And children's nonfiction has just about the right amount of information for the adult who wants to know a bit about something—but not too much.

Yet adults can read children's books for the wrong reasons and in the wrong way. They have left childhood behind and with it the simple approach that children make to a book. With maturity has come a determination to find all the symbolism, all the hidden meanings, all the nuances of style, all the elements of plot a book can offer, not as a collective whole, but individually. One must strip a book down into component parts, lay them out under a naked light bulb, and see them for what they are. Or one must analyze carefully to determine the author's motivation, his quirks of ego that gave rise to the book. Sometimes what the reader finds using this kind of approach is worth finding: parts of the book are not

large enough, the author's motives are unworthy, or the book may even be something less than accurate. Every reader needs to test what he reads to some extent. But adults need not destroy for themselves in the process of analysis the kind of wholehearted pleasure a child can get from reading.

People who read children's books professionally have to read them, of course, with children in mind. They must evaluate the usefulness of the books for a given situation. They must ask if the audience best able and most likely to read a given book will feel that it has what is needed in a reasonable form. Will children be misled by anything in the book? Will children be able to find themselves in the book or does the adult show through too much? Are the style and language suitable for the intended reader? All these and more, all of the questions this book has asked, these readers must raise. And they must answer on the basis of what they know about children, and on the basis of how good the book is and how well the author chose his subject and carried out what he intended to do.

Far luckier than those who read children's books for a purpose are those who read them for pleasure. For them, reading children's books can become something of an addiction. Not because the reader is childish, but because there is true pleasure to be had in a children's book.

For all who read children's books, whether because they want to or have to or both, there are both advantages and rules. One of the greatest advantages of reading children's books is the sense they give of being a part not just of today but of tomorrow as well. The good author for children is growing toward tomorrow just as children are; he accepts what must be and hopes to influence what will be. The reader who reads books by such authors is not molded to the common understandings of adults, which too often form the basis of everyday adult books, but must accept the future also. Reading good children's books enables adults to stay on the edge of the future, a hard place to be, but an interesting one. Other advantages children's

books provide are the opportunity to know what children are reading and thinking, which may make talking to children and understanding them easier, and the opportunity to keep one's imagination supple.

Rules for reading children's books begin with rules for everyone. The first is to read each book for what it is. It is important for the reader to enter into the spirit of the book, to read it from the inside, giving himself up to what it has to offer. Children's books are sometimes deceptively simple. It is sometimes easy to see other things an author could have done with his material, other information he could have included, other conclusions he could have introduced. But a children's book is best when it does not wander too much, when it does not expect the reader to spread himself too thin. A book about whales need not discuss walruses as well, because that is not what the author set out to do. When the reader picked up the book, he knew he was getting a book on whales and he should throw himself into the spirit of whales. In fiction, if the author is telling about the adventures of a whale on its yearly migration to the southern waters, the reader should not expect the author to delve into the life histories of the men on a ship who are trying to harpoon the whale at some point. That is another book and not one the author set out to write.

The second rule is to approach a children's book as a worthy object. The reader who approaches a children's book as if it is something of little value will only toy with it, he will find nothing of value in what he reads. We most often find what we are looking for.

A third rule is that the adult must read those books he chooses looking for the best each book has to offer and for the good things it holds for him or for a child. No adult book is perfect, and no children's book is perfect either. The reader must allow what is good and what is important to him to come through. Each reader makes of every book he really reads a unique book, a unique experi-

ence, and this can be as true for an adult reading a children's book as for anything else, providing the book is well chosen.

A fourth rule in reading children's books is to choose well. The adult should not think that every children's book will interest him. If he is an expert in a subject, a beginning book about that subject may seem dull indeed, because everything the book has to say is more than familiar to him before he begins. If the subject is one the reader could not be less interested in, he should not expect even a children's book to awaken in him a sudden and overwhelming delight. At the same time, a well-chosen book, of either fiction or nonfiction, will tell him something new and will give him something of interest. Fortunately we are all different, and we all like some things and dislike others. The good book that does not interest one adult will interest another.

Beyond the general rules for all adults are some very special rules for those moments when an adult reads a children's book for pleasure. The first of these is for fiction, and it says that the adult reader should not leave his adult self behind when he enters a children's book. Rather, he should bring all the insight he has to bear on the book. A good book speaks on many levels. The authors of most children's books are adults, and although they see the world through a child or through a childlike situation in the books they write, they remain adults. For the adult reader there are overtones that a child will not see and does not need to see. The child lives the book through the child characters and sees only what the child knows. But the adult will also see the world of adults that swirls around the child. He will enter into the child characters and sense again what it means to be a child, but he will also view the book from the outside and imagine other things that must be happening that a child reader cannot. This need not be, indeed should not be, in the book that is an "adult children's," deliberately given overtones that adults are supposed to grasp. It will happen in any well-written chil-

Reading a Children's Book

dren's book of fiction meant for a child but deriving out of truths all perceptive readers can recognize.

The second rule is for nonfiction, and it says that adults should not hesitate to look for almost anything they want to know in a children's book. There are few better sources to be found of clear, concise, factual information on almost any subject. Such books can also be entertaining. And unlike the reading of children's fiction, the reading of children's nonfiction can provide coffee-table or cocktail-hour conversation. The adult reader of children's books can place himself among the "best-informed" of his friends.

The kind of children's books the adult chooses to read will depend on him. The larger question with many adults is: Is there time to read children's books? There are so many adult books to be read. There are all those committees. And everyone seems to want something at once. When does anyone find time to fit children's books in, too? It is only half true that people find time to do the things they really want to do. Most people really want to do more things than they can possibly accomplish in the time they have to do them. Yet there can be times, or a special time, for doing this special kind of reading.

One time for an adult to read a children's book is when he has had a hard day or when he feels a little under the weather. The day Kirkegaard, Camus, or even Truman Capote seem too much to encounter may be the day for a children's book. The adult might try keeping one around the house for such first-aid purposes—from the library, borrowed from a friendly child, or even specially bought. It may lighten his load some, for children's books do have a tendency to look on the light side. After all, children are optimists. They still think they can conquer the world.

Or the adult can read a children's book on a day when things seem to be going unusually well, maybe even too well. Most people are suspicious of too much good fortune. On such a day, the adult

will whip through a children's book in a hurry, and it will reinforce his mood, make him feel that maybe he is really achieving his childhood dreams at last.

Another day for the adult to read a children's book is one on which he feels especially creative, when he has just made something or done something that gave him a feeling of accomplishment. A good children's book may help him to preserve the mood. Eric Berne, the psychoanalyst who wrote *Games People Play*, says that creativity is a part of the beneficial child that resides in each adult. Maybe a children's book can even help the adult who needs to create something find that child inside.

Adults can read a children's book when they are looking for a bit of information about something. The local library or bookstore will probably be able to provide a relatively simple book that will tell all he needs to know. He might even find instructions for stopping the drip of a faucet or mending the crack in the wall. He can learn how to mount butterflies or to tell a wyvern from a cockatrice. Cooking, sewing, science, history, geography, biography, and even philosophy. All are a part of children's literature.

The adult may choose to read a children's book on a day when suddenly everything has grown too complicated. Children's books do not uncomplicate life, but they do take smaller segments of it than most adult books do and try to establish some sense in what they picture. A child can sometimes see to the heart of a matter before an adult because he does not see quite all the possibilities in a situation that an adult does. Consequently, he doesn't get bogged down in unnecessary details as readily as an adult (though he may get into trouble because he does not see the entire scope of important details). An adult reading a children's book and seeing the world again with the directness of a child, though with the comprehension of an adult, may grasp new ways of threading the maze he is in.

All of these times, and many others, are times when time stops, or

should. All adults need moments when they disengage themselves from all that goes on around to reappraise themselves and their situations. And in those times becoming childlike again for a little while may be one way of really seeing themselves. This happens if the adult has a good book, the right book, and is able somehow to leave useless appendages of concern behind and become a part of the book, as a child does. It can be done. Some people do it.

It is even possible, for the adult who has children available, to find time to read a children's book by reading to them. Not every child will sit still for being read to these days, but many will. It is a fine old custom, reading aloud. And there is more to be gained from it than just the contents of the book, rich though the book may be. A book shared is an experience shared, a delight shared. One profits both from the book and from the enriched relationship the reading may have created with someone else.

How should an adult read a children's book? First the reader selects the book he wants. Then he decides if he will read it to himself or with someone else. In either case he finds a comfortable chair. He does not lie on the floor with it as a child might because that position tends to be uncomfortable for an adult. He makes sure he has a good light nearby. If he is not dieting, he may have a snack of some sort nearby also. Adjusting himself carefully to the chair, he finds the most comfortable position and then he starts on the first page. If there is a foreword, he may or may not read it, depending on his attitude toward these matters and the need there seems to be for a foreword. (Fortunately, few children's books have them, so this is a decision he will not face often.)

He reads at what seems to be a normal pace for the book and for him. He does not rush it, but neither does he spend too much time savoring good sentence construction or unusual words. He is out for the story or for the information he needs. As he reads along, even if he is tempted to do so, he does not read the end before he gets there—unless he is the kind of reader who can never wait.

From Childhood to Childhood

When he finishes the book, and he may very well finish it in one sitting—a further advantage of children's book reading—he sits and savors it a moment. He reflects on what the author has said. He may even go back and read again some places that particularly charmed him. Then he puts the book down, gets up, and at that point he may even find himself a true believer.

Who is the heretic? He is someone who does not remember from childhood and has not discovered as an adult how good a children's book can be. Who is the true believer? He is one who remembers or who has encountered the truth as an adult. He knows a children's book can be good reading. The difference between the two, the heretic and the true believer, can be one good book.

Some Helps for Further Reading

There are so many children's books, and so many new ones always arriving, that to include a list of specific books here would be, perhaps, to leave out the very ones a reader might most enjoy. For those who want to read children's books—look in the library. Consult the children's librarian. Look in a good bookstore. And for further guidance see:

Aids to Choosing Books for Children by Ingeborg Boudreau and issued by The Children's Book Council (175 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, 10010).

This is a list of lists of children's books. It includes both general lists and very specific subject category lists, all of which are readily

Some Helps for Further Reading

available (though some for a price), and many of which are revised frequently.

SOME BOOKS ABOUT CHILDREN'S BOOKS

ADAMS, BESS P., *About Books and Children*. Henry Holt, 1953.

A historical survey of children's literature, including critical evaluations and a bibliography.

ARBUTHNOT, MAY HILL, *Children and Books*, 3rd. ed. Scott, Foresman, 1964.

A textbook, with an annotated bibliography.

———, *Children's Reading in the Home*. Scott, Foresman, 1969.

Kinds of books, criteria for books, lists of books, and suggestions for sharing books in the home.

BECHTEL, LOUISE SEAMAN, *Books in Search of Children*. Macmillan, 1969.

Speeches and essays by the first editor of children's books.

CAMERON, ELEANOR, *The Green and Burning Tree*. Atlantic-Little Brown, 1969.

An author of children's books writes, in a series of essays, about her own experiences with books and writing.

DARLING, RICHARD L., *The Rise of Children's Book Reviewing in America 1865-1881*. R. R. Bowker, 1968.

For those interested in a serious study of early book reviewing of children's books in America.

DAWSON, MILDRED A., *Children, Books and Reading*. International Reading Association, 1964.

The teacher's approach, in a collection of speeches; with bibliography.

DUFF, ANNIS, *Bequest of Wings*. Viking Press, 1944.

———, *Longer Flight*. Viking Press, 1955.

Two books that express the joy of reading as it was experienced by one family.

EATON, ANNE THAXTER, *Reading with Children*. Viking Press, 1952.

What books can do for a child, and how to bring the child and the books together.

———, *Treasure for the Taking*, rev. ed. Viking Press, 1957.

A bibliography of books by subject.

Some Helps for Further Reading

FENNER, PHYLLIS, *The Proof of the Pudding—What Children Read*. John Day, 1957.

A children's librarian shares her experiences with children and books and children's approaches to books.

FIELD, ELINOR WHITNEY, *Horn Book Reflections*. The Horn Book, 1969. Fifty-two articles from *The Horn Book* that appeared between 1949 and 1966 covering all phases of children's literature.

FISHER, MARGERY, *Intent Upon Reading*. Franklin Watts, 1962.

An English critic and librarian looks at modern children's fiction.

FRANK, JOSETTE, *Your Child's Reading Today*, rev. ed. Doubleday, 1969.

A book about books and with lists of books for parents by a staff member of the Child Study Association.

HAZARD, PAUL, *Books, Children and Men*. The Horn Book, 1944.

Standards for children's books from a great French critic and scholar.

HOLLOWELL, LILLIAN, *A Book of Children's Literature*, 3rd ed. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

A textbook with some annotated bibliographies.

HUCK, CHARLOTTE, and KUHN, DORIS YOUNG, *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*, rev. ed. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Fitting books into the classroom—how and what books.

JORDAN, ALICE M., *From Rollo to Tom Sawyer and Other Papers*. The Horn Book, 1948.

Lectures and papers on various aspects of nineteenth-century children's literature.

KINGMAN, LEE; FOSTER, JOANNA; LONTOFT, RUTH GILES, eds., *Illustrators of Children's Books 1957-1966*. The Horn Book, 1968.

A discussion of illustration and illustration technique in the period, with biographies of illustrators.

LARRICK, NANCY, *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*, 3rd. rev. ed. Doubleday, 1969.

A book for the concerned parent who wants to tempt his child to read. Annotated bibliography.

MAHONEY, BERTHA E.; LATIMER, LOUISE P.; FOLMSBEE, BEULAH, *Illustrators of Children's Books 1744-1945*. The Horn Book, 1947.

The development of children's book illustration.

MAHONEY, BERTHA E., and WHITNEY, ELINOR, *Realms of Gold in Children's Books*. Doubleday, Doran, 1929.

Some Helps for Further Reading

Children's books appraised by age levels and subject matter.

MEIGS, CORNELIA, ed., *A Critical History of Children's Literature*. Macmillan, 1953.

A history of children's literature, with annotated bibliographies, to 1950.

MILLER, BERTHA MAHONEY; VIGUERS, RUTH HILL; DOLPHIN, MARCIA, *Illustrators of Children's Books 1946-1956*. The Horn Book, 1958.

A discussion of illustrators of the period, their illustrations and their biographies.

ROBINSON, EVELYN ROSE, *Readings About Children's Literature*. David McKay, 1966.

Selected writings by authors, librarians, teachers, and other specialists on every phase of children's books.

SAYERS, FRANCES CLARKE, *Summoned by Books*. Viking Press, 1965.

Essays by the author on books, children and books, storytelling, and librarians who have made children's books important.

SMITH, ELVA S., *The History of Children's Literature*. American Library Association, 1937.

A historical outline and bibliographies of selected readings.

SMITH, IRENE, *A History of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals*. Viking Press, 1957.

The history of the awards and information about award winners.

SMITH, LILLIAN, *The Unreluctant Years*. American Library Association, 1953; Viking Compass edition (paper), 1967.

A great librarian's approach to the best in children's literature.

TARG, WILLIAM, *Bibliophile in the Nursery*. Scarecrow, 1969.

A book for the collector of old and rare children's books and for those just interested in what collectors collect.

VIGUERS, RUTH HILL, *Margin for Surprise*. Little, Brown, 1964.

A series of essays on books, librarians, and children and books.

WALSH, FRANCES, ed. *That Eager Zest*. Lippincott, 1961.

An anthology of short essays, extracts from books, and poems by authors remembering the books of their childhood or seeing others enjoy children's books. Much of it, but not all, autobiographical.

Some Helps for Further Reading

ABOUT BOOKS IN GENERAL

FOSTER, JOANNA, *Pages, Pictures and Print*. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958.

Modern processes of book production; a children's book, but a clear and simple explanation for everyone.

GRANNIS, CHANDLER, *What Happens in Book Publishing?* 2nd ed. Columbia University Press, 1967.

Articles on various aspects of modern American publishing by people active in the field.

LEHMANN-HAUPT, HELLMUT, *The Book in America*. R. R. Bowker, 1952.
A history of American publishing and printing.

(Continued from front flap)

"The only thing I know for sure is that thoughts and ideas must change to stay alive . . . However my thinking proceeds, much of what is here will remain as a basis for all the new things I hope to learn . . . For this is how learning proceeds for adults and for children. Imperfect learnings move from one to another for polishing and perfecting and eventually from one generation to the next: *From Childhood to Childhood*."

Essential reading for students and professionals, the book will delight librarians, teachers, parents, and aspiring writers in the field of children's literature.

About the Author

Chicago-born and now a New Yorker, Jean Karl started her career in children's reading with Scott, Foresman & Company, and later joined Abingdon Press as Children's Book Editor. In 1961 Miss Karl was asked to start the Children's Book Department at Atheneum, where she is now Vice President and Director of that department as well as Children's Book Editor. Under her direction, Atheneum's children's book list has won two Newbery Awards with three runners-up and a Caldecott Award with a runner-up. To date more than thirty of Atheneum's books have been listed in the ALA's "Notable Children's Books of the Year."

Miss Karl has been president of the Children's Book Council, chairman of the ALA-CBC Joint Committee, chairman of the CBC committee on liaison with other organizations, and chairman of the Amy Loveman National Award.

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